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THE MORNING REVEL.

—FRONTISPIECE—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 5.

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THE Wandering Jew

BY

EUGENE SUE

CONTAINING THE DORE ILLUSTRATIONS

In Five Volumes—Volume Five

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THE

WANDERING JEW.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GOOD NEWS.

By the alteration in the countenance of Father d'Aigrigny, his pale cheek, and the feebleness of his walk, one might see that the terrible scene in the square of Notre-Dame had violently reacted upon his health. Yet his face was radiant and triumphant, as he entered Rodin's chamber, exclaiming: "Excellent news!"

On these words, Rodin started. In spite of his weakness, he raised his head, and his eyes shone with a curious, uneasy, piercing expression. With his lean hand he beckoned Father d'Aigrigny to approach the bed, and said to him, in a broken voice, so weak that it was scarcely audible: "I am very ill—the cardinal has nearly fin-

12-13-54 Gift Mrs. Ben Adams Mrs. Ray P. McCarty

ished me—but if this excellent news—relates to the Rennepont affair—of which I hear nothing—it might save me yet!"

"Be saved then!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, forgetting the recommendations of Dr. Baleinier; "read, rejoice! What you foretold is beginning to be realized!"

So saying, he drew a paper from his pocket, and delivered it to Rodin, who seized it with an eager and trembling hand. Some minutes before, Rodin would have been really incapable of continuing his conversation with the cardinal, even if prudence had allowed him to do so; nor could he have read a single line, so dim had his sight become. But, at the words of Father d'Aigrigny, he felt such a renewal of hope and vigor that, by a mighty effort of energy and will, he rose to a sitting posture, and, with clear head, and look of intelligent animation, he read rapidly the paper that Father d'Aigrigny had just delivered to him.

The cardinal, amazed at this sudden transfiguration, asked himself if he beheld the same man, who, a few minutes before, had fallen back on his bed, almost insensible.

Hardly had Rodin finished reading, than he uttered a cry of stifled joy, saying, with

an accent impossible to describe: "ONE gone! it works—'tis well!" And, closing his eyes in a kind of ecstatic transport, a smile of proud triumph overspread his face, and rendered him still more hideous, by discovering his yellow and gumless teeth. His emotion was so violent that the paper fell from his trembling hand.

"He has fainted," cried Father d'Aigrigny, with uneasiness, as he leaned over Rodin. "It is my fault, I forgot that the doctor cautioned me not to talk to him of serious matters."

"No; do not reproach yourself," said Rodin, in a low voice, half raising himself in the bed. "This unexpected joy may perhaps cure me. Yes—I scarce know what I feel—but look at my cheeks—it seems to me that, for the first time since I have been stretched on this bed of pain, they are a little warm."

Rodin spoke the truth. A slight color appeared suddenly on his livid and icy cheeks; his voice, though still very weak, became less tremulous, and he exclaimed, in a tone of conviction that startled Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate, "This first success answers for the others. I read the future. Yes, yes; our cause will triumph. Every member of the execrable Rennepont

family will be crushed—and that soon—you will see—"

Then pausing, Rodin threw himself back on the pillow, exclaiming: "Oh! I am choked with joy. My voice fails me."

"But what is it?" asked the cardinal of Father d'Aigrigny.

The latter replied, in a tone of hypocritical sanctity: "One of the heirs of the Rennepont family, a poor fellow, worn out with excesses and debauchery, died three days ago, at the close of some abominable orgies, in which he had braved the cholera with sacrilegious impiety. In consequence of the indisposition that kept me at home, and of another circumstance, I only received to-day the certificate of the death of this victim of intemperance and irreligion. I must proclaim it to the praise of his reverence"—pointing to Rodin—"that he told me, the worst enemies of the descendants of that infamous renegade would be their own bad passions, and that we might look to them as our allies against the whole impious race. And so it has happened with Jacques Rennepont."

"You see," said Rodin, in so faint a voice that it was almost unintelligible, "the punishment begins already. One of the Renneponts is dead—and believe me—

this certificate," and he pointed to the paper that Father d'Aigrigny held in his hand, "will one day be worth forty millions to the Society of Jesus—and that—because—"

The lips alone finished the sentence. During some seconds, Rodin's voice had become so faint that it was at last quite imperceptible. His larnyx, contracted by violent emotion, no longer emitted any sound. The Jesuit, far from being disconcerted by this incident, finished his phrase, as it were, by expressive pantomime. Raising his head proudly, he tapped his forehead with his forefinger, as if to express that it was to his ability this first success was owing. But he soon fell back again on the bed, exhausted, breathless, sinking, with his cotton handkerchief pressed once more to his parched lips. The good news, as Father d'Aigrigny called it, had not cured Rodin. For a moment only he had had the courage to forget his pain. But the slight color on his cheek soon disappeared; his face became once more livid. His sufferings, suspended for a moment, were so much increased in violence that he writhed beneath the coverlet, and buried his face in the pillow, extending his arms above his head,

and holding them stiff as bars of iron. After this crisis, intense as it was rapid, during which Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate bent anxiously over him, Rodin, whose face was bathed in cold sweat, made a sign that he suffered less, and that he wished to drink of a potion to which he pointed. Father d'Aigrigny fetched it for him, and while the cardinal held him up with marked disgust, the abbe administered a few spoonfuls of the potion, which almost immediately produced a soothing effect.

"Shall I call M. Rousselet?" said Father d'Aigrigny, when Rodin was once more laid down in bed.

Rodin shook his head; then, with a fresh effort, he raised his right hand, opened it, and pointed with his forefinger to a desk in a corner of the room, to signify that, being no longer able to speak, he wished to write.

"I understand your reverence," said Father d'Aigrigny; "but first calm yourself. Presently, if you require it, I will give you writing materials."

Two knocks at the outer door of the next room interrupted this scene. From motives of prudence, Father d'Aigrigny had begged Rousselet to remain in the first of

the three rooms. He now went to open the door, and Rousselet handed him a voluminous packet, saying: "I beg pardon for disturbing you, father, but I was told to let you have these papers instantly."

"Thank you, M. Rousselet," said Father d'Aigrigny; "do you know at what hour Dr. Baleinier will return?"

"He will not be long, father, for he wishes to perform before night the painful operation that will have a decisive effect on the condition of Father Rodin. I am preparing what is necessary for it," added Rousselet, as he pointed to a singular and formidable apparatus, which Father d'Aigrigny examined with a kind of terror.

"I do not know if the symptom is a serious one," said the Jesuit, "but the reverend father has suddenly lost his voice."

"It is the third time this has happened within the last week," said Rousselet; "the operation of Dr. Baleinier will act both on the larnyx and on the lungs."

"Is the operation a very painful one?" asked Father d'Aigrigny.

"There is, perhaps, none more cruel in surgery," answered the young doctor; "and Dr. Baleinier has partly concealed its nature from Father Rodin."

"Please to wait here for Dr. Baleinier, and send him to us as soon as he arrives," resumed Father d'Aigrigny; and, returning to the sick-chamber, he sat down by the bedside, and said to Rodin, as he showed him the letter: "Here are different reports with regard to different members of the Rennepont family, whom I have had looked after by others, my indisposition having kept me at home for the last few days. I do not know, father, if the state of your health will permit you to hear—"

Rodin made a gesture, at once so supplicating and peremptory that Father d'Aigrigny felt there would be at least as much danger in refusing as in granting his request; so, turning toward the cardinal, still inconsolable at not having discovered the Jesuit's secret, he said to him with respectful deference, pointing at the same time to the letter: "Have I the permission of your Eminence?"

The prelate bowed, and replied: "Your affairs are ours, my dear father. The Church must always rejoice in what rejoices your glorious Company."

Father d'Aigrigny unsealed the packet, and found in it different notes in different handwritings. When he had read the first, his countenance darkened, and he

said, in a grave tone: "A misfortune—a great misfortune."

Rodin turned his head abruptly, and looked at him with an air of uneasy questioning.

"Florine is dead of the cholera," answered Father d'Aigrigny; "and what is the worst," added he, crumpling the note between his hands, "before dying, the miserable creature confessed to Mdlle. de Cardoville that she long acted as a spy under the orders of your reverence."

No doubt the death of Florine, and the confession she had made, crossed some of the plans of Rodin, for he uttered an inarticulate murmur, and his countenance expressed great vexation.

Passing to another note, Father d'Aigrigny continued: "This relates to Marshal Simon, and is not absolutely bad, but still far from satisfactory, as it announces some amelioration in his position. We shall see if it merits belief, by information from another source."

Rodin made a sign of impatience, to hasten Father d'Aigrigny to read the note, which he did as follows: " 'For some days, the mind of the marshal has appeared to be less sorrowful, anxious, and agitated. He lately passed two hours with his daugh-

ters, which had not been the case for some time before. The harsh countenance of the soldier Dagobert is becoming smoother —a sure sign of some amelioration in the condition of the marshal. Detected by their handwriting, the last anonymous letters were returned by Dagobert to the postman, without having been opened by the marshal. Some other method must be found to get them delivered.' "

Looking at Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny said to him:

"Your reverence thinks with me that this note is not very satisfactory?"

Rodin held down his head. One saw by the expression of his countenance how much he suffered by not being able to speak. Twice he put his hand to his throat, and looked at Father d'Aigrigny with anguish.

"Oh!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, angrily, when he had perused another note, "for one lucky chance to-day brings some very black ones."

At these words, turning hastily to Father d'Aigrigny, and extending his trembling hands, Rodin questioned him with look and gesture. The cardinal, sharing his uneasiness, exclaimed: "What do you learn by this note, my dear father?"

"We thought the residence of M. Hardy in our house completely unknown," replied Father d'Aigrigny, "but we now fear that Agricola Baudoin has discovered the retreat of his old master, and that he has even communicated with him by letter, through a servant of the house. So," added the reverend father, angrily, "during the three days that I have not been able to visit the pavilion, one of my servants must have been bought over. There is one of them, a man blind of one eye, whom I have always suspected—the wretch! But no! I will not yet believe this treachery. The consequences would be too deplorable; for I know how matters stand, and that such a correspondence might ruin everything. By awaking in M. Hardy memories with difficulty laid asleep, they might destroy in a single day all that has been done since he inhabits our house. Luckily, this note contains only doubts and fears; my other information will be more positive, and will not, I hope, confirm them."

"My dear father," said the cardinal, "do not despair. The Lord will not abandon the good cause!"

Father d'Aigrigny seemed very little consoled by this assurance. He remained still and thoughtful, while Rodin writhed

his head in a paroxysm of mute rage, as he reflected on this new check.

"Let us turn to the last note," said Father d'Aigrigny, after a moment of thoughtful silence. "I have so much confidence in the person who sends it that I cannot doubt the correctness of the information it contains. May it contradict the others!"

In order not to break the chain of facts contained in this last note, which was to have so startling an effect on the actors in this scene, we shall leave it to the reader's imagination to supply the exclamations of surprise, hate, rage and fear of Father d'Aigrigny, and the terrific pantomime of Rodin, during the perusal of this formidable document, the result of the observations of a faithful and secret agent of the reverend fathers. Comparing this note with the other information received, the results appeared more distressing to the reverend fathers. Thus Gabriel had long and frequent conferences with Adrienne, who before was unknown to him. Agricola Baudoin had opened a communication with Francis Hardy, and the officers of justice were on the track of the authors and instigators of the riot which had led to the burning of the factory of Baron

Tripeaud's rival. It seemed almost certain that Mdlle. de Cardoville had had an interview with Prince Djalma.

This combination of facts showed that, faithful to the threats she had uttered to Rodin, when she had unmasked the double perfidy of the reverend father, Mdlle. de Cardoville was actively engaged in uniting the scattered members of her family, to form a league against those dangerous enemies, whose detestable projects, once unveiled and boldly encountered, could hardly have a chance of success. The reader will not understand the tremendous effect of this note on Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin—on Rodin, stretched powerless on a bed of pain at the moment when the scaffolding, raised with so much labor, seemed to be tumbling around him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE OPERATION.

We have given up the attempt to paint the countenance, attitude, and gesticulation of Rodin during the reading of this note, which seemed to ruin all his most cherished hopes. Everything was failing at once, at the moment when only superhuman trust in the success of his plans

could give him sufficient energy to strive against mortal sickness. A single, absorbing thought had agitated him even to delirium: What progress, during his illness, had been made in this immense affair? He had first heard a good piece of news, the death of Jacques Rennepont; but now the advantages of this decease, which reduced the number of the heirs from seven to six, were entirely lost. To what purpose would be this death, if the other members of the family, dispersed and persecuted with such infernal perseverance, were to unite and discover the enemies who had so long aimed at them in darkness? If all those wounded hearts were to console, enlighten, support each other, their cause would be gained, and the inheritance rescued from the reverend fathers. What was to be done? Strange power of the human will!—Rodin had one foot in the grave; he was almost at the last gasp; his voice had failed him. And yet that obstinate nature, so full of energy and resources, did not despair. Let but a miracle restore his health, and that firm confidence in the success of his projects, which has given him power to struggle against disease, tells him that he could yet save all—but then he must have health and

life! Health! life! His physician does not know if he will survive the shock—if he can bear the pain—of a terrible operation. Health! life! and just now Rodin heard talk of the solemn funeral they had prepared for him. And yet—health, life, he will have them. Yes; he was willed to live—and he has lived—why should he not live longer? He will live—because he has willed it!

All that we have just written passed through Rodin's mind in a second. His features, convulsed by the mental torment he endured, must have assumed a very strange expression, for Father d'Aigrigny and the cardinal looked at him in silent consternation. Once resolved to live, and to sustain a desperate struggle with the Rennepont family, Rodin acted in consequence. For a few moments Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate believed themselves under the influence of a dream. By an effort of unparalleled energy, and as if moved by hidden mechanism, Rodin sprang from the bed, dragging the sheet with him, and trailing it, like a shroud, behind his livid and fleshless body. The room was cold; the face of the Jesuit was bathed in sweat; his naked and bony feet left their moist print upon the stones.

"What are you doing? It is death!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, rushing toward Rodin, to force him to lie down again.

But the latter, extending one of his skeleton arms, as hard as iron, pushed aside Father d'Aigrigny with inconceivable vigor, considering the state of exhaustion in which he had so long been.

"He has the strength of a man in a fit of epilepsy," said Father d'Aigrigny, recovering his balance.

With a steady step Rodin advanced to the desk on which Dr. Baleinier daily wrote his prescriptions. Seating himself before it, the Jesuit took pen and paper, and began to write in a firm hand. His calm, slow, and sure movements had in them something of the deliberateness remarked in somnambulists. Mute and motionless, hardly knowing whether they dreamed or not, the cardinal and Father d'Aigrigny remained staring at the incredible coolness of Rodin, who, half-naked, continued to write with perfect tranquillity.

"But, father," said the Abbe d'Aigrigny, advancing toward him, "this is madness!"

Rodin shrugged his shoulders, stopped him with a gesture, and made him a sign to read what he had just written.

The reverend father expected to see the ravings of a diseased brain; but he took the note, while Rodin commenced another.

"My lord!" exclaimed Father d'Aigrigny, "read this!"

The cardinal read the paper, and, returning it to the reverend father with equal amazement, added: "It is full of reason, ability, and resources. We shall thus be able to neutralize the dangerous combination of Abbe Gabriel and Mdlle. de Cardoville, who appear to be the most formidable leaders of the coalition."

"It is really miraculous," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Oh, my dear father!" whispered the cardinal, shaking his head; "what a pity that we are the only witnesses of this scene! What an excellent MIRACLE we could have made of it! In one sense, it is another Raising of Lazarus!"

"What an idea, my lord!" answered Father d'Aigrigny, in a low voice. "It is perfect—and we must not give it up—"

This innocent little plot was interrupted by Rodin, who, turning his head, made a sign to Father d'Aigrigny to approach, and delivered to him another sheet, with this note attached: "To be executed within an hour."

Having rapidly perused the paper, Father d'Aigrigny exclaimed: "Right! I had not thought of that. Instead of being fatal, the correspondence between Agricola and M. Hardy may thus have the best results. Really," added the reverend father in a low voice to the prelate, while Rodin continued to write, "I am quite confounded. I read—I see—and yet I can hardly believe my eyes. Just before, exhausted and dying—and now with his mind as clear and penetrating as ever. Can this be one of the phenomena of somnambulism, in which the mind alone governs and sustains the body?"

Suddenly the door opened, and Dr. Baleinier entered the room. At sight of Rodin, seated half-naked at the desk, with his feet upon the cold stones, the doctor exclaimed, in a tone of reproach and alarm: "But, my lord—but, father—it is murder to let the unhappy man do this!—If he is delirious from fever, he must have the strait-waistcoat, and be tied down in bed."

So saying, Dr. Baleinier hastily approached Rodin, and took him by the arm. Instead of finding the skin dry and chilly, as he expected, he found it flexible, almost damp. Struck with sur-

prise, the doctor sought to feel the pulse of the left hand, which Rodin resigned to him, while he continued working with the right.

"What a prodigy," cried the doctor, as he counted Rodin's pulse; "for a week past, and even this morning, the pulse has been abrupt, intermittent, almost insensible, and now it is firm, regular—I am really puzzled—what then has happened? I can hardly believe what I see," added the doctor, turning toward Father d'Aigrigny and the cardinal.

"The reverend father, who had first lost his voice, was next seized with such furious and violent despair, caused by the receipt of bad news," answered Father d'Aigrigny, "that we feared a moment for his life; while now, on the contrary, the reverend father has gained sufficient strength to go to his desk, and write for some minutes, with a clearness of argument and expression which has confounded both the cardinal and myself."

"There is no longer any doubt of it," cried the doctor. "The violent despair has caused a degree of emotion, which will admirably prepare the reactive crisis that I am now almost certain of producing by the operation."

"You persist in the operation?" whispered Father d'Aigrigny, while Rodin continued to write.

"I might have hesitated this morning; but, disposed as he now is for it, I must profit by the moment of excitement, which will be followed by greater depression."

"Then, without the operation—" said the cardinal.

"This fortunate and unexpected crisis will soon be over, and the reaction may kill him, my lord."

"Have you informed him of the serious nature of the operation?"

"Pretty nearly, my lord."

"But it is time to bring him to the point."

"That is what I will do, my lord," said Dr. Baleinier; and approaching Rodin, who continued to write, he thus addressed him, in a firm voice: "My reverend father, do you wish to be up and well in a week?"

Rodin nodded, full of confidence, as much as to say: "I am up already."

"Do not deceive yourself," replied the doctor. "This crisis is excellent, but it will not last, and if we would profit by it, we must proceed with the operation of which I have spoken to you—or, I tell you

plainly, I answer for nothing after such a shock."

Rodin was the more struck with these words, as, half an hour ago, he had experienced the short duration of the improvement occasioned by Father d'Aigrigny's good news, and as already he felt increased oppression on the chest.

Dr. Baleinier, wishing to decide him, added: "In a word, father, will you live or die?"

Rodin wrote rapidly this answer, which he gave to the doctor: "To live, I would let you cut me limb from limb. I am ready for anything." And he made a movement to rise.

"I must tell you, reverend father, so as not to take you by surprise," added Dr. Baleinier, "that this operation is cruelly painful."

Rodin shrugged his shoulders, and wrote with a firm hand, "Leave me my head; you may take all the rest."

The doctor read these words aloud, and the cardinal and Father d'Aigrigny looked at each other in admiration of this dauntless courage.

"Reverend father," said Dr. Baleinier, "you must lie down."

Rodin wrote: "Get everything ready.

I have still some orders to write. Let me know when it is time."

Then folding up a paper, which he had sealed with a wafer, Rodin gave these words to Father d'Aigrigny: "Send this note instantly to the agent who addressed the anonymous letters to Marshal Simon."

"Instantly, reverend father," replied the abbe; "I will employ a sure messenger."

"Reverend father," said Dr. Baleinier to Rodin, "since you *must* write, lie down in bed, and write there, during our little preparations."

Rodin made an affirmative gesture and rose. But already the prognostics of the doctor were realized. The Jesuit could hardly remain standing for a second; he fell back into a chair, and looked at Dr. Baleinier with anguish, while his breathing became more and more difficult.

The doctor said to him: "Do not be uneasy. But we must make haste. Lean upon me and Father d'Aigrigny."

Aided by these two supporters, Rodin was able to regain the bed. Once there, he made signs that they should bring him pen, ink, and paper. Then he continued to write upon his knees, pausing from

time to time, to breathe with great difficulty.

"Reverend father," said Baleinier to D'Aigrigny, "are you capable of acting as one of my assistants in the operation? Have you that sort of courage?"

"No," said the reverend father; "in the army, I could never assist at an amputation. The sight of blood is too much for me."

"There will be no blood," said the doctor, "but it will be worse. Please send me three of our reverend fathers to assist me, and ask M. Rousselet to bring in the apparatus."

Father d'Aigrigny went out. The prelate approached the doctor, and whispered, pointing to Rodin:

"Is he out of danger?"

"If he stands the operation—yes, my lord."

"Are you sure that he will stand it?"

"To him I should say, 'yes'; to you, 'I hope so.'"

"And were he to die, would there be time to administer the sacraments in public, with a certain pomp, which always causes some little delay?"

"His dying may continue, my lord—a quarter of an hour."

"It is short, but we must be satisfied with that," said the prelate.

And, going to one of the windows, he began to tap with his fingers on the glass, while he thought of the illumination effects in the event of Rodin's lying in state. At this moment, Rousselet entered, with a large square box under his arm. He placed it on the drawers, and began to arrange his apparatus.

"How many have you prepared?" said the doctor.

"Six, sir."

"Four will do, but it is well to be fully provided. The cotton is not too thick?"

"Look, sir."

"Very good."

"And how is the reverend father?" asked the pupil.

"Humph!" answered the doctor, in a whisper. "The chest is terribly clogged, the respiration hissing, the voice gone—still there is a chance."

"All my fear is, sir, that the reverend father will not be able to stand the dreadful pain."

"It is another chance; but, under the circumstances, we must risk all. Come, my dear boy, light the taper; I hear our assistants."

Just then Father d'Aigrigny entered the room, accompanied by the three Jesuits who in the morning had walked in the garden. The two old men, with their rosy cheeks, and the young one, with the ascetic countenance, all three dressed in black, with their square caps and white bands, appeared perfectly ready to assist Dr. Baleinier in his formidable operation.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE TORTURE.

"REVEREND fathers," said Dr. Baleinier, graciously, to the three, "I thank you for your kind aid. What you have to do is very simple, and, by the blessing of Heaven, this operation will save the life of our dear Father Rodin."

The three black-gowns cast up their eyes piously, and then bowed altogether, like one man. Rodin, indifferent to what was passing around him, never ceased an instant to write or reflect. Nevertheless, in spite of his apparent calmness, he felt such difficulty in breathing that more than once Dr. Baleinier had turned round uneasily, as he heard the stifled rattling in the throat of the sick man. Making a sign to his pupil, the doctor approached Rodin,

and said to him: "Come, reverend father; this is the important moment. Courage!"

No sign of alarm was expressed in the Jesuit's countenance. His features remained impassible as those of a corpse. Only, his little reptile eyes sparkled still more brightly in their dark cavities. For a moment, he looked round at the spectators of this scene; then, taking his pen between his teeth, he folded and wafered another letter, placed it on the table beside the bed, and nodded to Dr. Baleinier, as if to say, "I am ready."

"You must take off your flannel waistcoat and your shirt, father." Rodin hesitated an instant, and the doctor resumed: "It is absolutely necessary, father."

Aided by Baleinier, Rodin obeyed, while the doctor added, no doubt to spare his modesty: "We shall only require the chest, right and left, my dear father."

And now Rodin, stretched upon his back, with his dirty nightcap still on his head, exposed the upper part of a livid trunk, or rather, the bony cage of a skeleton, for the shadows of the ribs and cartilages encircled the skin with deep, black lines. As for the arms, they resembled bones twisted with cord and covered with tanned parchment.

"Come, M. Rousselet, the apparatus!" said Baleinier.

Then, addressing the three Jesuits, he added: "Please draw near, gentlemen; what you have to do is very simple, as you will see."

It was indeed very simple. The doctor gave to each of his four assistants a sort of little steel tripod about two inches in diameter and three in height; the circular center of this tripod was filled with cotton; the instrument was held in the left hand by means of a wooden handle. In the right hand, each assistant held a small tin tube about eighteen inches long; at one end was a mouthpiece to receive the lips of the operator, and the other spread out so as to form a cover to the little tripod. These preparations had nothing alarming in them. Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate, who looked on from a little distance, could not understand how this operation should be so painful. They soon understood it.

Dr. Baleinier, having thus provided his four assistants, made them approach Rodin, whose bed had been rolled into the middle of the room. Two of them were placed on one side, two on the other.

"Now, gentlemen," said Dr. Baleinier,

"set light to the cotton; place the lighted part on the skin of his reverence, by means of the tripod which contains the wick; cover the tripod with the broad part of the tube, and then blow through the other end to keep up the fire. It is very simple, as you see."

It was, in fact, full of the most patriarchal and primitive ingenuity. Four lighted cotton wicks, so disposed as to burn very slowly, were applied to the two sides of Rodin's chest. This is vulgarly called the *moxa*. The trick is done when the whole thickness of the skin has been burned slowly through. It lasts seven or eight minutes. They say that an amputation is nothing to it. Rodin had watched the preparations with intrepid curiosity. But, at the first touch of the four fires, he writhed like a serpent, without being able to utter a cry. Even the expression of pain was denied him. The four assistants being disturbed by the sudden start of Rodin, it was necessary to begin again.

"Courage, my dear father! offer these sufferings to the Lord!" said Dr. Baleinier, in a sanctified tone. "I told you the operation would be very painful; but then it is salutary in proportion. Come;

you that have shown such decisive resolution, do not fail at the last moment!"

Rodin had closed his eyes, conquered by the first agony of pain. He now opened them, and looked at the doctor as if ashamed of such weakness. And yet on the sides of his chest were four large, bleeding wounds—so violent had been the first singe. As he again extended himself on the bed of torture, Rodin made a sign that he wished to write. The doctor gave him the pen, and he wrote as follows, by way of memorandum: "It is better not to lose any time. Inform Baron Tripeaud of the warrant issued against Leonard, so that he may be on his guard."

Having written this note, the Jesuit gave it to Dr. Baleinier, to hand it to Father d'Aigrigny, who was as much amazed as the doctor and the cardinal at such extraordinary presence of mind in the midst of such horrible pain. Rodin, with his eyes fixed on the reverend father, seemed to wait with impatience for him to leave the room to execute his orders. Guessing the thought of Rodin, the doctor whispered Father d'Aigrigny, who went out.

"Come, reverend father," said the doc-

tor, "we must begin again. This time, do not move."

Rodin did not answer, but clasped his hands over his head, closed his eyes, and presented his chest. It was a strange, lugubrious, almost fantastic spectacle. The three priests, in their long black gowns, leaned over this body, which almost resembled a corpse, and blowing through their tubes into the chest of the patient, seemed as if pumping up his blood by some magic charm. A sickening odor of burned flesh began to spread through the silent chamber, and each assistant heard a slight crackling beneath the smoking trivet; it was the skin of Rodin giving way to the action of fire, and splitting open in four different parts of his chest. The sweat poured from his livid face, which it made to shine; a few locks of his gray hair stood up stiff and moist from his temples. Sometimes the spasms were so violent that the veins swelled on his stiffened arms, and were stretched like cords ready to break.

Enduring this frightful torture with as much intrepid resignation as the savage whose glory consists in despising pain, Rodin gathered his strength and courage from the hope—we had almost said the certainty—of life. Such was the make of

this dauntless character, such the energy of this powerful mind, that, in the midst of indescribable torments, his one fixed idea never left him. During the rare intervals of suffering—for pain is unequal even at this degree of intensity—Rodin still thought of the Rennepont inheritance, and calculated his chances, and combined his measures, feeling that he had not a minute to lose. Dr. Baleinier watched him with extreme attention, waiting for the effects of the reaction of pain upon the patient, who seemed already to breathe with less difficulty.

Suddenly Rodin placed his hand on his forehead, as if struck with some new idea, and, turning his head toward Dr. Baleinier, made a sign to him to suspend the operation.

"I must tell you, reverend father," answered the doctor, "that it is not half finished, and, if we leave off, the renewal will be more painful—"

Rodin made a sign that he did not care, and that he wanted to write.

"Gentlemen, stop a moment," said Dr. Baleinier; "keep down your moxas, but do not blow the fire."

So the fire was to burn slowly, instead of fiercely, but still upon the skin of the

patient. In spite of this pain, less intense, but still sharp and keen, Rodin, stretched upon his back, began to write, holding the paper above his head. On the first sheet he traced some alphabetic signs, part of a cipher known to himself alone. In the midst of the torture, a luminous idea had crossed his mind; fearful of forgetting it amid his sufferings, he now took note of it. On another paper he wrote the following, which was instantly delivered to Father d'Aigrigny: "Send B. immediately to Faringhea, for the report of the last few days with regard to Djalma, and let B. bring it hither on the instant." Father d'Aigrigny went out to execute this new order. The cardinal approached a little nearer to the scene of the operation, for, in spite of the bad odor of the room, he took delight in seeing the Jesuit half roasted, having long cherished against him the rancor of an Italian and a priest.

"Come, reverend father," said the doctor to Rodin, "continue to be admirably courageous, and your chest will free itself. You have still a bitter moment to go through—and then I have good hope."

The patient resumed his former position. The moment Father d'Aigrigny returned, Rodin questioned him with a look, to which

the reverend father replied by a nod. At a sign from the doctor, the four assistants began to blow through the tubes with all their might. This increase of torture was so horrible that, in spite of his self-control, Rodin gnashed his teeth, started convulsively, and so expanded his palpitating chest, that, after a violent spasm, there rose from his throat and lungs a scream of terrific pain—but it was free, loud, and sonorous.

"The chest is free!" said the doctor, in triumph. "The lungs have play—the voice returns—he is saved!—Blow, gentlemen, blow; and, reverend father, cry out as much as you please; I shall be delighted to hear you, for it will give you relief. Courage! I answer for the result. It is a wonderful cure. I will publish it by sound of trumpet!"

"Allow me, doctor," whispered Father d'Aigrigny, as he approached Dr. Baleinier; "the cardinal can witness that I claimed beforehand the publication of this affair—as a miraculous fact."

"Let it be miraculous, then," answered Dr. Baleinier, disappointed—for he set some value on his own work.

On hearing he was saved, Rodin, though his sufferings were perhaps worse than

ever, for the fire had now pierced the scarf-skin, assumed almost an infernal beauty. Through the painful contraction of his features shone the pride of savage triumph; the monster felt that he was becoming once more strong and powerful, and he seemed conscious of the evils that his fatal resurrection was to cause. And so, still writhing beneath the flames, he pronounced these words, the first that struggled from his chest: "I told you I should live!"

"You told us true," cried the doctor, feeling his pulse; "the circulation is now full and regular, the lungs are free. The reaction is complete. You are saved."

At this moment, the last shreds of cotton had burned out. The trivets were withdrawn, and on the skeleton trunk of Rodin were seen four large round blisters. The skin still smoked, and the raw flesh was visible beneath. In one of his sudden movements, a lamp had been misplaced, and one of these burns was larger than the others, presenting as it were to the eye a double circle. Rodin looked down upon his wounds. After some seconds of silent contemplation, a strange smile curled his lips. Without changing his position, he glanced at Father d'Aigrigny with an expression impossible to describe, and said to

him, as he slowly counted the wounds, touching them with his flat and dirty nail: "Father d'Aigrigny, what an omen!—Look here! one Rennepont—two Renneponts—three Renneponts—four Renne ponts—where is then the fifth!—Ah! here—this wound will count for two. They are twins."* And he emitted a little, dry, bitter laugh. Father d'Aigrigny, the cardinal, and Dr. Baleinier alone understood the sense of these mysterious and fatal words, which Rodin soon completed by a terrible allusion, as he exclaimed, with prophetic voice, and almost inspired air: "Yes, I say it. The impious race will be reduced to ashes, like the fragments of this poor flesh. I say it, and it will be so. I said I would live—and I do live!"

CHAPTER XXXI

VICE AND VIRTUE.

Two days have elapsed since Rodin was miraculously restored to life. The reader will not have forgotten the house in the

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* Jacques Rennepont being dead, and Gabriel out of the field, in consequence of his donation, there remained only five persons of the family—Rose and Blanche, Djalma, Adrienne and Hardy.

Rue Clovis, where the reverend father had an apartment, and where also was the lodging of Philemon, inhabited by Rose-Pompon. It is about three o'clock in the afternoon. A bright ray of light, penetrating through a round hole in the door of Mother Arsene's subterraneous shop, forms a striking contrast with the darkness of this cavern. The ray streams full upon a melancholy object. In the midst of fagots and faded vegetables, and close to a great heap of charcoal, stands a wretched bed; beneath the sheet, which covers it, can be traced the stiff and angular proportions of a corpse. It is the body of Mother Arsene herself, who died two days before, of the cholera. The burials have been so numerous that there has been no time to remove her remains. The Rue Clovis is almost deserted. A mournful silence reigns without, often broken by the sharp whistling of the north wind. Between the squalls, one hears a sort of pattering. It is the noise of the large rats, running to and fro across the heap of charcoal.

Suddenly, another sound is heard, and these unclean animals fly to hide themselves in their holes. Some one is trying to force open the door which communicates

between the shop and the passage. It offers but little resistance, and, in a few seconds, the worn-out lock gives way, and a woman enters. For a short time she stands motionless in the obscurity of the damp and icy cave. After a minute's hesitation, the woman advances, and the ray of light illumines the features of the Bacchanal Queen. Slowly she approached the funeral corpse. Since the death of Jacques the alteration in the countenance of Cephyse had gone on increasing. Fearfully pale, with her fine black hair in disorder, her legs and feet naked, she was barely covered with an old patched petticoat and a very ragged handkerchief.

When she came near the bed, she cast a glance of almost savage assurance at the shroud. Suddenly she drew back, with a low cry of involuntary terror. The sheet moved with a rapid undulation, extending from the feet to the head of the corpse. But soon the sight of a rat, flying along the side of the worm-eaten bedstead, explained the movement of the shroud. Recovering from her fright, Cephyse began to look for several things, and collected them in haste, as though she dreaded being surprised in the miserable shop. First, she seized a basket and filled it with char-

coal; then, looking from side to side, she discovered in a corner an earthen pot, which she took with a burst of ominous joy.

"It is not all, it is not all," said Cephyse, as she continued to search with an unquiet air.

At last she perceived near the stove a tin box, containing flint, steel and matches. She placed these articles on the top of the basket, and took it in one hand and the earthen pot in the other. As she passed near the corpse of the poor charcoal-dealer, Cephyse said, with a strange smile: "I rob you, poor Mother Arsene, but my theft will not do me much good."

Cephyse left the shop, reclosed the door as well as she could, went up the passage, and crossed the little courtyard which separated the front of the building from that part in which Rodin had lodged. With the exception of the windows of Philemon's apartment, where Rose-Pompon had so often sat perched like a bird, warbling Béranger, the other windows of the house were open. There had been deaths on the first and second floors, and, like many others, they were waiting for the cart piled up with coffins.

The Bacchanal Queen gained the stairs,

which led to the chambers formerly occupied by Rodin. Arrived at the landing-place, she ascended another ruinous staircase, steep as a ladder, and with nothing but an old rope for a rail. She at length reached the half-rotten door of a garret, situated in the roof. The house was in such a state of dilapidation that in many places the roof gave admission to the rain, and allowed it to penetrate into this cell, which was not above ten feet square, and lighted by an attic window. All the furniture consisted of an old straw mattress, laid upon the ground, with the straw peeping out from a rent in its ticking; a small earthenware pitcher, with the spout broken, and containing a little water, stood by the side of this couch. Dressed in rags, Mother Bunch was seated on the side of the mattress, with her elbows on her knees, and her face concealed in her thin, white hands. When Cephyse entered the room, the adopted sister of Agricola raised her head; her pale, mild face seemed thinner than ever, hollow with suffering, grief, misery; her eyes, red with weeping, were fixed on her sister with an expression of mournful tenderness.

"I have what we want, sister," said Cephyse, in a low, deep voice; "in this

basket there is wherewith to finish our misery."

Then, showing Mother Bunch the articles she had just placed on the floor, she added: "For the first time in my life, I have been a thief. It made me ashamed and frightened; I was never intended for that or worse. It is a pity," added she, with a sardonic smile.

After a moment's silence, the hunchback said to her sister in a heartrending tone: "Cephyse—my dear Cephyse—are you quite determined to die?"

"How should I hesitate?" answered Cephyse, in a firm voice. "Come, sister, let us once more make our reckoning. If even I could forget my shame, and Jacques' contempt in his last moments, what would remain to me? Two courses only; first, to be honest, and work for my living. But you know that, in spite of the best will in the world, work will often fail, as it has failed for the last few days, and even when I got it, I would have to live on four or five francs a week. Live? that is to say, die by inches. I know that already, and I prefer dying at once. The other course would be to live a life of infamy—and that I will not do. Frankly, sister, between frightful misery, infamy, or death,

can the choice be doubtful? Answer me!"

Then, without giving Mother Bunch time to speak, Cephyse added, in an abrupt tone: "Besides, what is the good of discussing it? I have made up my mind, and nothing shall prevent my purpose, since all that you, dear sister, could obtain from me was a delay of a few days, to see if the cholera could not save us the trouble. To please you I consented; the cholera has come, killed every one else in the house, but left us. You see, it is better to do one's own business," added she, again smiling bitterly. Then she resumed: "Besides, dear sister, you also wish to finish with life."

"It is true, Cephyse," answered the seamstress, who seemed very much depressed; "but alone—one has only to answer for one's self—and to die with you," added she, shuddering, "appears like being an accomplice in your death."

"Do you wish, then, to make an end of it, I in one place, you in another?—that would be agreeable!" said Cephyse, displaying in that terrible moment the sort of bitter and despairing irony which is more frequent than may be imagined in the midst of mortal anguish.

"Oh, no, no!" said the other, in alarm, "not alone—I will not die alone!"

"Do you not see, dear sister, we are right not to part? And yet," added Cephyse, in a voice of emotion, "my heart almost breaks sometimes, to think that you will die like me."

"How selfish!" said the hunchback, with a faint smile. "What reasons have I to love life? What void shall I leave behind me?"

"But you are a martyr, sister," resumed Cephyse. "The priests talk of saints! Is there one of them so good as you? And yet you are about to die like me, who have always been idle, careless, sinful—while you were so hard-working, so devoted to all who suffered. What should I say? You were an angel on the earth; and yet you will die like me, who have fallen as low as woman can fall," added the unfortunate, casting down her eyes.

"It is strange," answered Mother Bunch thoughtfully. "Starting from the same point, we have followed different roads, and yet we have reached the same goal—disgust of life. For you, my poor sister, but a few days ago, life was so fair, so full of pleasure and of youth; and now it is equally heavy with us both. After all, I

have followed to the end what was my duty," added she, mildly. "Agricola no longer needs me. He is married; he loves, and is beloved; his happiness is secured. Mdlle. de Cardoville wants for nothing. Fair, rich, prosperous—what could a poor creature like myself do for her? Those who have been kind to me are happy. What prevents my going now to my rest? I am so weary!"

"Poor sister!" said Cephyse, with touching emotion, which seemed to expand her contracted features; "when I think that, without informing me, and in spite of your resolutions never to see that generous young lady, who protected you, you yet had the courage to drag yourself to her house, dying with fatigue and want, to try to interest her in my fate—yes, dying, for your strength failed on the Champs-Elysees."

"And when I was able to reach the mansion, Mdlle. de Cardoville was unfortunately absent—very unfortunately!" repeated the hunchback, as she looked at Cephyse with anguish; "for the next day, seeing that our last resource had failed us, thinking more of me than of yourself, and determined at any price to procure us bread—"

She could not finish. She buried her face in her hands, and shuddered.

"Well, I did as so many other hapless women have done when work fails or wages do not suffice, and hunger becomes too pressing," replied Cephyse, in a broken voice; "only that, unlike so many others, instead of living on my shame, I shall die of it."

"Alas! this terrible shame, which kills you, my poor Cephyse, because you have a heart, would have been averted, had I seen Mdlle. de Cardoville, or had she but answered the letter which I asked leave to write to her at the porter's lodge. But her silence proves to me that she is justly hurt at my abrupt departure from her house. I can understand it; she believes me guilty of the blackest ingratitude—for she must have been greatly offended not to have deigned to answer me—and therefore I had not the courage to write a second time. It would have been useless, I am sure; for, good and just as she is, her refusals are inexorable when she believes them deserved. And besides, for what good? It was too late; you had resolved to die!"

"Oh, yes, quite resolved; for my infamy was gnawing at my heart. Jacques had died in my arms despising me; and I loved

him—mark me, sister," added Cephyse, with passionate enthusiasm, "I loved him as we love only once in life!"

"Let our fate be accomplished, then!" said Mother Bunch, with a pensive air.

"But you have never told me, sister, the cause of your departure from Mdlle. de Cardoville's," resumed Cephyse, after a moment's silence.

"It will be the only secret that I shall take with me, my dear Cephyse," said the other, casting down her eyes. And she thought, with bitter joy, that she would soon be delivered from the fear which had poisoned the last days of her sad life—the fear of meeting Agricola, informed of the fatal and ridiculous love she felt for him.

For, it must be said, this fatal and despairing love was one of the causes of the suicide of the unfortunate creature. Since the disappearance of her journal, she believed that the blacksmith knew the melancholy secret contained in its sad pages. She doubted not the generosity and good heart of Agricola; but she had such doubts of herself, she was so ashamed of this passion, however pure and noble, that, even in the extremity to which Cephyse and herself were reduced — wanting work, wanting bread—no power on earth could

have induced her to meet Agricola, in an attempt to ask him for assistance. Doubtless, she would have taken another view of the subject if her mind had not been obscured by that sort of dizziness to which the firmest characters are exposed when their misfortunes surpass all bounds. Misery, hunger, the influence, almost contagious in such a moment, of the suicidal ideas of Cephyse, and weariness of a life so long devoted to pain and mortification, gave the last blow to the sewing girl's reason. After long struggling against the fatal design of her sister, the poor, dejected, broken-hearted creature finished by determining to share Cephyse's fate, and seek in death the end of so many evils.

"Of what are you thinking, sister?" said Cephyse, astonished at the long silence. The other replied, trembling: "I think of that which made me leave Mdlle. de Cardoville so abruptly, and appear so ungrateful in her eyes. May the fatality which drove me from her house have made no other victims! may my devoted service, however obscure and powerless, never be missed by her, who extended her noble hand to the poor seamstress, and deigned to call me sister! May she be happy—oh, ever happy!" said Mother Bunch, clasping

her hands with the ardor of a sincere invocation.

"That is noble, sister—such a wish in such a moment!" said Cephyse.

"Oh," said her sister, with energy, "I loved, I admired that marvel of genius, and heart, and ideal beauty—I viewed her with pious respect — for never was the power of the Divinity revealed in a more adorable and purer creation. At least one of my last thoughts will have been of her."

"Yes, you will have loved and respected your generous patroness to the last."

"To the last!" said the poor girl, after a moment's silence. "It is true—you are right—it will soon be the last!—in a few moments, all will be finished. See how calmly we can talk of that which frightens so many others!"

"Sister, we are calm because we are resolved."

"Quite resolved, Cephyse?" said the hunchback, casting once more a deep and penetrating glance upon her sister.

"Oh, yes, if you are only as determined as I am."

"Be satisfied; if I put off from day to day the final moment," answered the seamstress, "it was because I wished to give you time to reflect. As for me—" She

did not finish, but she shook her head with an air of the utmost despondency.

"Well, sister, let us kiss each other," said Cephyse; "and, courage!"

The hunchback rose, and threw herself into her sister's arms. They held one another fast in a long embrace. There followed a few seconds of deep and solemn silence, only interrupted by the sobs of the sisters, for now they had begun to weep.

"Oh, Heaven! to love each other so, and to part forever!" said Cephyse. "It is a cruel fate."

"To part?" cried Mother Bunch, and her pale, mild countenance, bathed in tears, was suddenly illumined with a ray of divine hope; "to part, sister? oh, no! What makes me so calm is the deep and certain expectation, which I feel here at my heart, of that better world where a better life awaits us. God, so great, so merciful, so prodigal of good, cannot destine His creatures to be forever miserable. Selfish men may pervert His benevolent designs, and reduce their brethren to a state of suffering and despair. Let us pity the wicked and leave them! Come up on high, sister; men are nothing there, where God is all. We shall do well there. Let us depart, for it is late."

So saying, she pointed to the ruddy beams of the setting sun, which began to shine upon the window.

Carried away by the religious enthusiasm of her sister, whose countenance, transfigured, as it were, by the hope of an approaching deliverance, gleamed brightly in the reflected sunset, Cephyse took her hands, and, looking at her with deep emotion, exclaimed, "Oh, sister! how beautiful you look now!"

"Then my beauty comes rather late in the day," said Mother Bunch, with a sad smile.

"No, sister; for you appear so happy that the last scruples I had upon your account are quite gone."

"Then let us make haste," said the hunchback, as she pointed to the chafing-dish.

"Be satisfied, sister—it will not be long," said Cephyse. And she took the chafing-dish full of charcoal, which she had placed in a corner of the garret, and brought it out into the middle of the room.

"Do you know how to manage it?" asked the sewing-girl, approaching.

"Oh! it is very simple," answered Cephyse; "we have only to close door and window, and light the charcoal."

"Yes, sister; but I think I have heard that every opening must be well stopped, so as to admit no current of air."

"You are right, and the door shuts so badly."

"And look at the holes in the roof."

"What is to be done, sister?"

"I will tell you," said Mother Bunch. "The straw of our mattress, well twisted, will answer every purpose."

"Certainly," replied Cephyse. "We will keep a little to light our fire, and with the rest we will stop up all the crevices in the roof, and make filling for our doors and windows."

Then, smiling with that bitter irony, so frequent, we repeat, in the most gloomy moments, Cephyse added, "I say, sister, weather-boards at our doors and windows, to prevent the air from getting in—what a luxury! we are as delicate as rich people."

"At such a time, we may as well try to make ourselves a little comfortable," said Mother Bunch, trying to jest like the Bacchanal Queen.

And with incredible coolness, the two began to twist the straw into lengths of braid, small enough to be stuffed into the cracks of the door, and also constructed

large plugs, destined to stop up the crevices in the roof. While this mournful occupation lasted, there was no departure from the calm and sad resignation of the two unfortunate creatures.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SUICIDE.

CEPHYSE and her sister continued with calmness the preparation for their death.

Alas! how many poor young girls, like these sisters, have been, and still will be, fatally driven to seek in suicide a refuge from despair, from infamy, or from a too miserable existence! And upon society will rest the terrible responsibility of these sad deaths, so long as thousands of human creatures, unable to live upon the mockery of wages granted to their labor, have to choose between these three gulfs of shame and woe: a life of enervating toil and mortal privations, causes of premature death; prostitution, which kills also, but slowly —by contempt, brutality, and uncleanliness; suicide—which kills at once.

In a few minutes, the two sisters had constructed, with the straw of their couch, the calkings necessary to intercept the air,

and to render suffocation more expeditious and certain.

The hunchback said to her sister, "You are the taller, Cephyse, and must look to the ceiling; I will take care of the window and door."

"Be satisfied, sister; I shall have finished before you," answered Cephyse.

And the two began carefully to stop up every crevice, through which a current of air could penetrate into the ruined garret. Thanks to her tall stature, Cephyse was able to reach the holes in the roof, and to close them up entirely. When they had finished this sad work, the sisters again approached, and looked at each other in silence.

The fatal moment drew near; their faces, though still calm, seemed slightly agitated by that strange excitement which always accompanies a double suicide.

"Now," said Mother Bunch, "now for the fire!"

She knelt down before the little chafing-dish, filled with charcoal. But Cephyse took hold of her under the arm, and obliged her to rise again, saying to her, "Let me light the fire—that is my business."

"But, Cephyse—"

"You know, poor sister, that the smell of charcoal gives you the headache!"

At the simplicity of this speech, for the Bacchanal Queen had spoken seriously, the sisters could not forbear smiling sadly.

"Never mind," resumed Cephyse; "why suffer more and sooner than is necessary?"

Then, pointing to the mattress, which still contained a little straw, Cephyse added, "Lie down there, good little sister; when our fire is alight, I will come and sit down by you."

"Do not be long, Cephyse."

"In five minutes it will be done."

The tall building, which faced the street, was separated by a narrow court from that which contained the retreat of the two sisters, and was so much higher that, when the sun had once disappeared behind its lofty roof, the garret soon became dark. The light, passing through the dirty panes of the small window, fell faintly on the blue and white patchwork of the old mattress, on which Mother Bunch was now stretched, covered with rags. Leaning on her left arm, with her chin resting in the palm of her hand, she looked after her sister with an expression of heartrending grief. Cephyse, kneeling over the chafing-dish, with her face close to the black char-

coal, above which already played a little bluish flame, exerted herself to blow the newly-kindled fire which was reflected on the pale countenance of the unhappy girl.

The silence was deep. No sound was heard but the panting breath of Cephyse and at intervals the slight crackling of the charcoal, which began to burn, and already sent forth a faint, sickening vapor. Cephyse, seeing the fire completely lighted, and feeling already a little dizzy, rose from the ground, and said to her sister, as she approached, "It is done!"

"Sister," answered Mother Bunch, kneeling on the mattress, while Cephyse remained standing, "how shall we place ourselves? I should like to be near you to the last."

"Stop!" said Cephyse, half executing the measures of which she spoke, "I will sit on the mattress with my back against the wall. Now, little sister, you lie there. Lean your head upon my knees, and give me your hand. Are you comfortable so?"

"Yes, but I cannot see you."

"That is better. It seems there is a moment—very short, it is true—in which one suffers a good deal. And," added Cephyse, in a voice of emotion, "it will be as well not to see each other suffer."

"You are right, Cephyse."

"Let me kiss that beautiful hair for the last time," said Cephyse, as she pressed her lips to the silky locks which crowned the hunchback's pale and melancholy countenance, "and then—we will remain very quiet."

"Sister, your hand," said the sewing-girl; "for the last time, your hand—and then, as you say, we will move no more. We shall not have to wait long, I think, for I begin to feel dizzy. And you, sister?"

"Not yet," replied Cephyse; "I only perceive the smell of the charcoal."

"Do you know where they will bury us?" said Mother Bunch, after a moment's silence.

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Because I should like it to be in Pere-la-Chaise. I went there once with Agricola and his mother. What a fine view there is!—and then the trees, the flowers, the marble—do you know the dead are better lodged—than the living—and—"

"What is the matter, sister?" said Cephyse to her companion, who had stopped short, after speaking in a slow voice.

"I am giddy—my temples throb," was the answer. "How do you feel?"

"I only begin to be a little faint; it is

strange—the effect is slower with me than you."

"Oh! you see," said Mother Bunch, trying to smile, "I was always so forward. At school, do you remember, they said I was before the others. And now it happens again."

"I hope soon to overtake you this time," said Cephyse.

What astonished the sisters was quite natural. Though weakened by sorrow and misery, the Bacchanal Queen, with a constitution as robust as the other was frail and delicate, was necessarily longer than her sister in feeling the effects of the deleterious vapor. After a moment's silence, Cephyse resumed, as she laid her hand on the head she still held upon her knees, "You say nothing, sister! You suffer, is it not so?"

"No," said Mother Bunch, in a weak voice; "my eyelids are heavy as lead — I am getting benumbed—I feel that I speak more slowly—but I have no acute pain. And you, sister?"

"While you were speaking, I felt giddy —and now my temples throb violently."

"As it was with me just now. One would think it was more painful and difficult to die!"

Then, after a moment's silence, the hunchback said suddenly to her sister, "Do you think that Agricola will much regret me, and think of me for some time?"

"How can you ask?" said Cephyse, in a tone of reproach.

"You are right," answered Mother Bunch, mildly; "there is a bad feeling in such a doubt—but if you knew—"

"What, sister?"

The other hesitated for an instant, and then said, dejectedly, "Nothing." Afterward, she added, "Fortunately, I die convinced that he will never miss me. He married a charming girl, who loves him, I am sure, and will make him perfectly happy."

As she pronounced these last words, the speaker's voice grew fainter and fainter. Suddenly she started, and said to Cephyse, in a trembling, almost frightened tone, "Sister!—hold me in your arms—I am afraid—everything looks dark—everything is turning round." And the unfortunate girl, raising herself a little, hid her face in her sister's bosom, and threw her weak arms around her.

"Courage, sister!" said Cephyse, in a voice which was also growing faint, as she

pressed her closer to her bosom; "it will soon be over."

And Cephyse added, with a kind of envy, "Oh! why does my sister's strength fail so much sooner than mine? I have still my perfect senses, and I suffer less than she does. Oh! if I thought she would die first! But, no—I will go and hold my face over the chafing-dish rather."

At the movement Cephyse made to rise a feeble pressure from her sister held her back. "You suffer, my poor child!" said Cephyse, trembling.

"Oh, yes! a good deal now—do not leave me!"

"And I scarcely at all," said Cephyse, gazing wildly at the chafing-dish. "Ah!" added she, with a kind of fatal joy; "now I begin to feel it—I choke—my head is ready to split."

And indeed the destructive gas now filled the little chamber, from which it had, by degrees, driven all the air fit for respiration. The day was closing in, and the gloomy garret was only lighted by the reflection of the burning charcoal, which threw a red glare on the sisters, locked in each other's arms. Suddenly Mother Bunch made some slight convulsive movements, and pronounced these words in a

failing voice: "Agricola—Mademoiselle de Cardoville — Oh! farewell! Agricola — I—"

Then she murmured some unintelligible words; the convulsive movements ceased, and her arms, which had been clasped round Cephyse, fell inert upon the mattress.

"Sister!" cried Cephyse, in alarm, as she raised Mother Bunch's head, to look at her face: "Not already, sister! And I? and I?"

The sewing-girl's mild countenance was not paler than usual. Only her eyes, half-closed, seemed no longer to see anything, and a half smile of mingled grief and goodness lingered an instant about her violet lips, from which stole the almost imperceptible breath—and then the mouth became motionless, and the face assumed a great serenity of expression.

"But you must not die before me!" cried Cephyse, in a heartrending tone, as she covered with kisses the cold cheek. "Wait for me, sister! wait for me!"

Mother Bunch did not answer. The head, which Cephyse let slip from her hands, fell back gently on the mattress.

"My God! It is not my fault, if we do not die together!" cried Cephyse in de-

spair, as she knelt beside the couch, on which the other lay motionless.

"Dead!" she murmured in terror. "Dead before me! Perhaps it is that I am the stronger. Ah! it begins—fortunately—like her, I see everything dark blue—I suffer—what happiness! I can scarcely breathe. Sister!" she added, as she threw her arms round her loved one's neck; "I am coming—I am here!"

At the same instant, the sound of footsteps and voices was heard from the staircase. Cephyse had still presence of mind enough to distinguish the sound. Stretched beside the body of her sister, she raised her head hastily.

The noise approached, and a voice was heard exclaiming, not far from the door: "Good heavens, what a smell of fire!"

And, at the same instant, the door was violently shaken, and another voice exclaimed: "Open! open!"

"They will come in—they will save me—and my sister is dead. Oh, no! I will not have the baseness to survive her!"

Such was the last thought of Cephyse. Using what little strength she had left, she ran to the window and opened it—and, at the same instant that the half-broken door yielded to a vigorous effort from

without, the unfortunate creature precipitated herself from that third story into the court below. Just then, Adrienne and Agricola appeared on the threshold of the chamber. In spite of the stifling odor of the charcoal, Mdlle. de Cardoville rushed into the garret, and, seeing the stove, she exclaimed: "The unhappy girl has killed herself!"

"No, she has thrown herself from the window," cried Agricola; for, at the moment of breaking open the door, he had seen a human form disappear in that direction, and he now ran to the window.

"Oh! this is frightful!" he exclaimed with a cry of horror, as he put his hand before his eys, and returned pale and terrified to Mdlle. de Cardoville.

But, misunderstanding the cause of his terror, Adrienne, who had just perceived Mother Bunch through the darkness, hastened to answer: "No, she is here."

And she pointed to the pale form stretched on the mattress, beside which Adrienne now threw herself on her knees. Grasping the hands of the poor seamstress, she found them as cold as ice. Laying her hand on her heart, she could not feel it beat. Yet, in a few seconds, as the fresh air rushed into the room from the door and

window, Adrienne thought she remarked an almost imperceptible pulsation, and she exclaimed: "Her heart beats! Run quickly for help! Luckily, I have my smelling-bottle."

"Yes, yes! help for her—and for the other, too, if it is yet time!" cried the smith in despair, as he rushed down the stairs, leaving Mdlle. de Cardoville still kneeling by the side of the mattress.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONFESSIONS.

During the painful scene that we have just described, a lively emotion glowed in the countenance of Mdlle. de Cardoville, grown pale and thin with sorrow. Her cheeks, once so full, were now slightly hollowed, while a faint line of transparent azure encircled those large black eyes, no longer so bright as formerly. But the charming lips, though contracted by painful anxiety, had retained their rich and velvet moisture. To attend more easily to Mother Bunch, Adrienne had thrown aside her bonnet, and the silky waves of her beautiful golden hair almost concealed her face as she bent over the mattress, rubbing the thin, ivory hands of the poor seam-

stress, completely called to life by the salubrious freshness of the air, and by the strong action of the salts which Adrienne carried in her smelling-bottle. Luckily, Mother Bunch had fainted, rather from emotion and weakness than from the effects of suffocation, the senses of the unfortunate girl having failed her before the deleterious gas had attained its highest degree of intensity.

Before continuing the recital of the scene between the seamstress and the patrician, a few retrospective words will be necessary. Since the strange adventure at the theater of the Porte-Saint-Martin, where Djalma, at peril of his life, rushed upon the black panther in sight of Mdlle. de Cardoville, the young lady had been deeply affected in various ways. Forgetting her jealousy, and the humiliation she had suffered in presence of Djalma—of Djalma exhibiting himself before every one with a woman so little worthy of him—Adrienne was for a moment dazzled by the chivalrous and heroic action of the prince, and said to herself: "In spite of odious appearances, Djalma loves me enough to brave death in order to pick up my nosegay."

But with a soul so delicate as that of this young lady, a character so generous,

and a mind so true, reflection was certain soon to demonstrate the vanity of such consolations, powerless to cure the cruel wounds of offended dignity and love.

"How many times," said Adrienne to herself, and with reason, "has the prince encountered, in hunting, from pure caprice and with no gain, such danger as he braved in picking up my bouquet! and then, who tells me he did not mean to offer it to the woman who accompanied him?"

Singular (it may be) in the eyes of the world, but just and great in those of Heaven, the ideas which Adrienne cherished with regard to love, joined to her natural pride, presented an invincible obstacle to the thought of her succeeding this woman (whoever she might be), thus publicly displayed by the prince as his mistress. And yet Adrienne hardly dared avow to herself that she experienced a feeling of jealousy, only the more painful and humiliating the less her rival appeared worthy to be compared to her.

At other times, on the contrary, in spite of a conscious sense of her own value, Mdlle. de Cardoville, remembering the charming countenance of Rose-Pompon, asked herself if the bad taste and improper manners of this pretty creature resulted

from precocious and depraved effrontery, or from a complete ignorance of the usages of society. In the latter case, such ignorance, arising from a simple and ingenuous nature, might in itself have a great charm; and if to this attraction, combined with that of incontestable beauty, were added sincere love and a pure soul, the obscure birth or neglected education of the girl might be of little consequence, and she might be capable of inspiring Djalma with a profound passion. If Adrienne hesitated to see a lost creature in Rose-Pompon, notwithstanding unfavorable appearances, it was because, remembering what so many travelers had related of Djalma's greatness of soul, and recalling the conversation she had overheard between him and Rodin, she could not bring herself to believe that a man of such remarkable intelligence, with so tender a heart, so poetical, imaginative and enthusiastic a mind, could be capable of loving a depraved and vulgar creature, and of openly exhibiting himself in public along with her. There was a mystery in the transaction which Adrienne sought in vain to penetrate. These trying doubts, this cruel curiosity, only served to nourish Adrienne's fatal love; and we may imagine her incurable despair when she found that

the indifference or even disdain of Djalma was unable to stifle a passion that now burned more fiercely than ever. Sometimes, having recourse to notions of fatality, she fancied that she was destined to feel this love, that Djalma must therefore deserve it, and that one day whatever was incomprehensible in the conduct of the prince would be explained to his advantage. At other times, on the contrary, she felt ashamed of excusing Djalma, and the consciousness of this weakness was for Adrienne a constant occasion for remorse and torture. The victim of all these agonies, she lived in perfect solitude.

The cholera soon broke out, startling as a clap of thunder. Too unhappy to fear the pestilence on her own account, Adrienne was only moved by the sorrows of others. She was among the first to contribute to those charitable donations which were now flowing in from all sides in the admirable spirit of benevolence. Florine was suddenly attacked by the epidemic. In spite of the danger, her mistress insisted on seeing her, and endeavored to revive her failing courage. Conquered by this new mark of kindness, Florine could no longer conceal the treachery in which she had borne a part. Death was about to de-

liver her from the odious tyranny of the people whose yoke weighed upon her, and she was at length in a position to reveal everything to Adrienne. The latter thus learned how she had been continually betrayed by Florine, and also the cause of the sewing-girl's abrupt departure. At these revelations, Adrienne felt her affection and tender pity for the poor seamstress greatly increase. By her command, the most active steps were taken to discover traces of the hunchback; but Florine's confession had a still more important result. Justly alarmed at this new evidence of Rodin's machinations, Adrienne remembered the projects formed, when, believing herself beloved, the instinct of affection had revealed to her the perils to which Djalma and the other members of the Rennepont family were exposed. To assemble the race around her, and bid them rally against the common enemy, such was Adrienne's first thought, when she heard the confession of Florine. She regarded it as a duty to accomplish this project. In a struggle with such dangerous and powerful adversaries as Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny, the Princess de Saint-Dizier, and their allies, Adrienne saw not only the praiseworthy and perilous task of

unmasking hypocrisy and cupidity, but also, if not a consolation, at least a generous diversion in the midst of terrible sorrows.

From this moment, a restless, feverish activity took the place of the mournful apathy in which the young lady had languished. She called round her all the members of her family capable of answering the appeal, and, as had been mentioned in the secret note delivered to Father d'Aigrigny, Cardoville House soon became the center of the most active and unceasing operations, and also a place of meeting, in which the modes of attack and defense were fully discussed. Perfectly correct in all points, the secret note of which we have spoken stated, as a mere conjecture, that Mdlle. de Cardoville had granted an interview to Djalma. This fact was untrue, but the cause which led to the supposition will be explained hereafter. Far from such being the case, Mdlle. de Cardoville scarcely found, in attending to the great family interests now at stake, a momentary diversion from the fatal love, which was slowly undermining her health, and with which she so bitterly reproached herself.

The morning of the day on which Adri-

enne, at length discovering Mother Bunch's residence, came so miraculously to rescue her from death, Agricola Baudoin had been to Cardoville House to confer on the subject of Francis Hardy, and had begged Adrienne to permit him to accompany her to the Rue Clovis, whither they repaired in haste.

Thus, once again, there was a noble spectacle, a touching symbol! Mdlle. de Cardoville and Mother Bunch, the two extremities of the social chain, were united on equal terms—for the seamstress and the fair patrician were equal in intelligence and heart—and equal also, because the one was the ideal of riches, grace, and beauty, and the other the ideal of resignation and unmerited misfortune—and does not a halo rest on misfortune borne with courage and dignity? Stretched on her mattress, the hunchback appeared so weak that even if Agricola had not been detained on the ground-floor with Cephyse, now dying a dreadful death, Mdlle. de Cardoville would have waited some time before inducing Mother Bunch to rise and accompany her to her carriage. Thanks to the presence of mind and pious fraud of Adrienne, the sewing-girl was persuaded that Cephyse had been carried to a neighboring hospital,

to receive the necessary succor, which promised to be crowned with success. The hunchback's faculties recovering slowly from their stupor, she at first received this fable without the least suspicion—for she did not even know that Agricola had accompanied Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"And it is to you, lady, that Cephyse and I owe our lives," said she, turning her mild and melancholy face toward Adrienne, "*you*, kneeling in this garret, near this couch of misery, where I and my sister meant to die—for you assure me, lady, that Cephyse was succored in time?"

"Be satisfied. I was told just now that she was recovering her senses."

"And they told her I was living, did they not, lady? Otherwise, she would perhaps regret having survived me."

"Be quite easy, my dear girl!" said Adrienne, pressing the poor hands in her own, and gazing on her with eyes full of tears; "they have told her all that was proper. Do not trouble yourself about anything; only think of recovering—and I hope you will yet enjoy that happiness of which you have known so little, my poor child."

"How kind you are, lady! After flying

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—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 5, p. 72.

from your house—and when you must think me so ungrateful!"

"Presently, when you are not so weak, I have a great deal to tell you. Just now, it would fatigue you too much. But how do you feel?"

"Better, lady. This fresh air—and then the thought, that, since you are come—my poor sister will no more be reduced to despair; for I will tell you all, and I am sure you will have pity on Cephyse—will you not, lady?"

"Rely upon me, my child," answered Adrienne, forced to dissemble her painful embarrassment; "you know I am interested in all that interests you. But tell me," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a voice of emotion, "before taking this desperate resolution, did you not write to me?"

"Yes, lady."

"Alas!" resumed Adrienne, sorrowfully; "and when you received no answer—how cruel, how ungrateful you must have thought me!"

"Oh! never, lady, did I accuse you of such feelings; my poor sister will tell you so. You had my gratitude to the last."

"I believe you—for I know your heart. But how then did you explain my silence?"

"I had justly offended you by my sudden departure, lady."

"Offended! Alas! I never received your letter."

"And yet you know that I wrote to you, lady?"

"Yes, my poor girl; I know also that you wrote to me at my porter's lodge. Unfortunately, he delivered your letter to one of my women, named Florine, telling her it came from you."

"Florine! the young woman that was so kind to me?"

"Florine deceived me shamefully: she was sold to my enemies, and acted as a spy on my actions."

"*She!* Good heavens!" cried Mother Bunch. "Is it possible?"

"She herself," answered Adrienne, bitterly; "but, after all, we must pity as well as blame her. She was forced to obey by a terrible necessity, and her confession and repentance secured my pardon before her death."

"Then she is dead—so young! so fair!"

"In spite of her faults, I was greatly moved by her end. She confessed what she had done, with such heartrending regrets. Among her avowals, she told me she had intercepted a letter, in which you

asked for an interview that might save your sister's life."

"It is true, lady; such were the terms of my letter. What interest had they to keep it from you?"

"They feared to see you return to me, my good guardian angel. You love me so tenderly, and my enemies dreaded your faithful affection, so wonderfully aided by the admirable instinct of your heart. Ah! I shall never forget how well-deserved was the horror with which you were inspired by a wretch whom I defended against your suspicions."

"M. Rodin?" said Mother Bunch, with a shudder.

"Yes," replied Adrienne; "but we will not talk of these people now. Their odious remembrance would spoil the joy I feel in seeing you restored to life—for your voice is less feeble, your cheeks are beginning to regain a little color. Thank God! I am so happy to have found you once more. If you knew all that I hope, all that I expect from our reunion—for we will not part again—promise me that, in the name of our friendship."

"I—your friend!" said Mother Bunch, timidly casting down her eyes.

"A few days before your departure from

my house did I not call you my friend, my sister? What is there changed? Nothing, nothing," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, with deep emotion. "One might say, on the contrary, that a fatal resemblance in our positions renders your friendship even dearer to me. And I shall have it, shall I not? Oh, do not refuse it me—I am so much in want of a friend!"

"You, lady? you in want of the friendship of a poor creature like me?"

"Yes," answered Adrienne, as she gazed on the other with an expression of intense grief; "nay, more, you are perhaps the only person to whom I could venture to confide my bitter sorrows." So saying, Mdlle. de Cardoville colored deeply.

"And how do I deserve such marks of confidence?" asked Mother Bunch, more and more surprised.

"You deserve it by the delicacy of your heart, by the steadiness of your character," answered Adrienne, with some hesitation; "then—you are a woman—and I am certain you will understand what I suffer, and pity me."

"Pity you, lady?" said the other, whose astonishment continued to increase. "You, a great lady, and so much envied—I, so humble and despised, pity you?"

"Tell me, my poor friend," resumed Adrienne, after some moments of silence, "are not the worst griefs those which we dare not avow to any one, for fear of raillery and contempt? How can we venture to ask interest or pity for sufferings that we hardly dare avow to ourselves, because they make us blush?"

The sewing-girl could hardly believe what she heard. Had her benefactress felt, like her, the effects of an unfortunate passion, she could not have held any other language. But the seamstress could not admit such a supposition; so, attributing to some other cause the sorrows of Adrienne, she answered mournfully, while she thought of her own fatal love for Agricola, "Oh! yes, lady. A secret grief, of which we are ashamed, must be frightful—very frightful!"

"But then what happiness to meet, not only a heart noble enough to inspire complete confidence, but one which has itself been tried by a thousand sorrows, and is capable of affording you pity, support, and counsel! Tell me, my dear child," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, as she looked attentively at Mother Bunch, "if you were weighed down by one of those sorrows, at which one blushes, would you not be happy,

very happy, to find a kindred soul, to whom you might intrust your griefs, and half relieve them by entire and merited confidence?"

For the first time in her life, Mother Bunch regarded Mdlle. de Cardoville with a feeling of suspicion and sadness.

The last words of the young lady seemed to her full of meaning. "Doubtless, she knows my secret," said Mother Bunch to herself; "doubtless, my journal has fallen into her hands. She knows my love for Agricola, or at least suspects it. What she has been saying to me is intended to provoke my confidence, and to assure herself if she has been rightly informed."

These thoughts excited in the work-girl's mind no bitter or ungrateful feeling toward her benefactress; but the heart of the unfortunate girl was so delicately susceptible on the subject of her fatal passion, that, in spite of her deep and tender affection for Mdlle. de Cardoville, she suffered cruelly at the thought of Adrienne's being mistress of her secret.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MORE CONFESSIONS.

THE fancy, at first so painful, that Mdlle. de Cardoville was informed of her love for

Agricola, was soon exchanged in the hunchback's heart, thanks to the generous instincts of that rare and excellent creature, for a touching regret, which showed all her attachment and veneration for Adrienne.

"Perhaps," said Mother Bunch to herself, "conquered by the influence of the adorable kindness of my protectress, I might have made to her a confession which I could make to none other, and revealed a secret which I thought to carry with me to my grave. It would, at least, have been a mark of gratitude to Mdlle. de Cardoville; but, unfortunately, I am now deprived of the sad comfort of confiding my only secret to my benefactress. And then—however generous may be her pity for me, however intelligent her affection, she cannot—she, that is so fair and so much admired — she cannot understand how frightful is the position of a creature like myself, hiding, in the depths of a wounded heart, a love at once hopeless and ridiculous. No, no—in spite of the delicacy of her attachment, my benefactress must unconsciously hurt my feelings, even while she pities me—for only sympathetic sorrows can console each other. Alas! why did she not leave me to die?"

These reflections presented themselves to the thinker's mind as rapidly as thought could travel. Adrienne observed her attentively; she remarked that the sewing-girl's countenance, which had lately brightened up, was again clouded, and expressed a feeling of painful humiliation. Terrified at this relapse into gloomy dejection, the consequences of which might be serious, for Mother Bunch was still very weak, and, as it were, hovering on the brink of the grave, Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed hastily: "My friend, do not you think with me, that the most cruel and humiliating grief admits of consolation, when it can be intrusted to a faithful and devoted heart?"

"Yes, lady," said the young seamstress, bitterly; "but the heart which suffers in silence should be the only judge of the moment for making so painful a confession. Until then, it would perhaps be more humane to respect its fatal secret, even if one had by chance discovered it."

"You are right, my child," said Adrienne, sorrowfully; "if I choose this solemn moment to intrust you with a very painful secret, it is that, when you have heard me, I am sure you will set more value on your

life as knowing how much I need your tenderness, consolation, and pity."

At these words, the other half raised herself on the mattress, and looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville in amazement. She could scarcely believe what she heard; far from designing to intrude upon her confidence, it was her protectress who was to make the painful confession, and who came to implore pity and consolation from her!

"What!" stammered she; "you, lady!"

"I come to tell you that I suffer, and am ashamed of my sufferings. Yes," added the young lady, with a touching expression, "yes—of all confessions, I am about to make the most painful—I love—and I blush for my love."

"Like myself!" cried Mother Bunch, involuntarily, clasping her hands together.

"I love," resumed Adrienne, with a long pent-up grief; "I love, and am not beloved—and my love is miserable, is impossible—it consumes me—it kills me—and I dare not confide to any one the fatal secret!"

"Like me," repeated the other, with a fixed look. "She—a queen in beauty, rank, wealth, intelligence—suffers like me. Like

me, poor unfortunate creature! she loves, and is not loved again."

"Well, yes! like you, I love and am not loved again," cried Mdlle. de Cardoville; "was I wrong in saying that to you alone I could confide my secret—because, having suffered the same pangs, you alone can pity them?"

"Then, lady," said Mother Bunch, casting down her eyes, and recovering from her first amazement, "you knew—"

"I knew all, my poor child—but never should I have mentioned your secret had I not had one to intrust you with, of a still more painful nature. Yours is cruel, but mine is humiliating. Oh, my sister!" added Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a tone impossible to describe, "misfortune, you see, blends and confounds together what are called distinctions of rank and fortune —and often those whom the world envies are reduced by suffering far below the poorest and most humble, and have to seek from the latter pity and consolation."

Then, drying her tears, which now flowed abundantly, Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed, in a voice of emotion: "Come, sister! courage, courage! let us love and sustain each other. Let this sad and mysterious bond unite us forever."

"Oh, lady! forgive me. But now that you know the secret of my life," said the work-girl, casting down her eyes, and unable to vanquish her confusion, "it seems to me that I can never look at you without blushing."

"And why? because you love Agricola?" said Adrienne. "Then I must die of shame before you, since, less courageous than you, I had not the strength to suffer and be resigned, and so conceal my love in the depths of my heart. He that I love, with a love henceforth deprived of hope, know of that love and despised it—preferring to me a woman, the very choice of whom was a new and grievous insult, if I am not much deceived by appearances. I sometimes hope that I am deceived on this point. Now tell me—is it for you to blush?"

"Alas, lady! who could tell you all this?"

"Which you only intrusted to your journal? Well, then—it was the dying Florine who confessed her misdeeds. She had been base enough to steal your papers, forced to this odious act by the people who had dominion over her. But she had read your journal—and as every good feeling was not dead within her, your admirable resignation, your melancholy and pious

love, had left such an impression on her mind, that she was able to repeat whole passages to me on her deathbed, and thus to explain the cause of your sudden disappearance—for she had no doubt that the fear of seeing your love for Agricola divulged had been the cause of your flight."

"Alas! it is but too true, lady."

"Oh, yes!" answered Adrienne bitterly; "those who employed the wretched girl to act as she did well knew the effect of the blow. It was not their first attempt. They reduced you to despair, they would have killed you, because you were devoted to me, and because you had guessed their intentions. Oh! these black-gowns are implacable, and their power is great!" said Adrienne, shuddering.

"It is fearful, lady."

"But do not be alarmed, dear child; you see that the arms of the wicked have turned against themselves; for, the moment I knew the cause of your flight, you became dearer to me than ever. From that time I made every exertion to find out where you were; after long efforts, it was only this morning that the person I had employed succeeded in discovering that you inhabited this house. Agricola was

with me when I heard it, and instantly asked to accompany me."

"Agricola!" said Mother Bunch, clasping her hands; "he came—"

"Yes, my child—be calm. While I attended to you, he was busy with your poor sister. You will soon see him."

"Alas, lady!" resumed the hunchback, in alarm. "He doubtless knows—"

"Your love? No, no; be satisfied. Only think of the happiness of again seeing your good and worthy brother."

"Ah, lady! may he never know what caused me so much shame, that I was like to die of it. Thank God, he is not aware of it!"

"Then let us have no more sad thoughts, my child. Only remember that this worthy brother came here in time to save us from everlasting regrets—and you from a great fault. Oh! I do not speak of the prejudices of the world, with regard to the right of every creature to return to Heaven a life that has become too burdensome!—I only say that you ought not to have died, because those who love you, and whom you love, were still in need of your assistance."

"I thought you happy; Agricola was married to the girl of his choice, who will,

I am sure, make him happy. To whom could I be useful?"

"First, to myself, as you see—and then, who tells you that Agricola will never have need of you? Who tells you that his happiness, or that of his family, will last forever, and will not be tried by cruel shocks? And even if those you love had been destined to be always happy, could their happiness be complete without you? And would not your death, with which they would perhaps have reproached themselves, have left behind it endless regrets?"

"It is true, lady," answered the other, "I was wrong—the dizziness of despair had seized me—frightful misery weighed upon us—we had not been able to find work for some days—we lived on the charity of a poor woman, and her the cholera carried off. To-morrow or next day, we must have died of hunger."

"Die of hunger!—and you knew where I lived!"

"I had written to you, lady, and, receiving no answer, I thought you offended at my abrupt departure."

"Poor, dear child! you must have been, as you say, seized with dizziness in that terrible moment; so that I have not the courage to reproach you for doubting me

a single instant. How can I blame you? Did I not myself think of terminating my life?"

"You, lady!" cried the hunchback.

"Yes, I thought of it—when they came to tell me that Florine, dying, wished to speak to me. I heard what she had to say; her revelations changed my projects. This dark and mournful life, which had become insupportable to me, was suddenly lighted up. The sense of duty woke within me. You were no doubt a prey to horrible misery; it was my duty to seek and save you. Florine's confessions unveiled to me the new plots of the enemies of my scattered family, dispersed by sorrows and cruel losses; it was my duty to warn them of their danger, and to unite them against the common enemy. I had been the victim of odious maneuvers; it was my duty to punish their authors, for fear that, encouraged by impunity, these black-gowns should make other victims. Then the sense of duty gave me strength, and I was able to rouse myself from my lethargy. With the help of the Abbe Gabriel, a sublime, oh! a sublime priest!—the ideal of a true Christian—the worthy brother of Agricola—I courageously entered on the struggle. What shall I say to you, my child? The

performance of these duties, the hope of finding you again, have been some relief to me in my trouble. If I was not consoled, I was at least occupied. Your tender friendship, the example of your resignation will do the rest—I think so—I am sure so—and I shall forget this fatal love."

At the moment Adrienne pronounced these words, rapid footsteps were heard upon the stairs, and a young, clear voice exclaimed: "Oh! dear me, poor Mother Bunch! How lucky I have come just now! If only I could be of some use to her!"

Almost immediately, Rose-Pompon entered the garret with precipitation. Agricola soon followed the grisette, and, pointing to the open window, tried to make Adrienne understand by signs that she was not to mention to the girl the deplorable end of the Bacchanal Queen. This pantomime was lost on Mdlle. de Cardoville. Adrienne's heart swelled with grief, indignation, pride, as she recognized the girl she had seen at the Porte-Saint-Martin in company with Djalma, and who alone was the cause of the dreadful sufferings she endured since that fatal evening. And, strange irony of fate! it was at the very moment when Adrienne had just made the humiliating and cruel

confession of her despised love that the woman, to whom she believed herself sacrificed, appeared before her.

If the surprise of Mdlle. de Cardoville was great, Rose-Pompon's was not less so. Not only did she recognize in Adrienne the fair young lady with the golden locks, who had sat opposite to her at the theater, on the night of the adventure of the black panther, but she had serious reasons for desiring most ardently this unexpected interview. It is impossible to paint the look of malignant joy and triumph that she affected to cast upon Adrienne. The first impulse of Mdlle. de Cardoville was to quit the room. But she could not bear to leave Mother Bunch at this moment, or to give, in the presence of Agricola, her reasons for such an abrupt departure, and moreover, an inexplicable and fatal curiosity held her back, in spite of her offended pride. She remained, therefore, and was about to examine closely, to hear and to judge, this rival who had nearly occasioned her death, to whom, in her jealous agony, she had ascribed so many different aspects, in order to explain Djalma's love for such a creature.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RIVALS.

Rose-Pompon, whose presence caused such deep emotion in Mdlle. de Cardoville, was dressed in the most showy and extravagant bad taste. Her very small, narrow, rose-colored satin bonnet, placed so forward over her face as almost to touch the tip of her little nose, left uncovered behind half of her light, silky hair; her plaid dress, of an excessively broad pattern, was open in front, and the almost transparent gauze, rather too honest in its revelations, hardly covered the charms of the form beneath.

The grisette having run all the way upstairs, held in her hands the ends of her large blue shawl, which, falling from her shoulders, had slid down to her wasp-like waist, and there been stopped by the swell of the figure. If we enter into these details, it is to explain how, at the sight of this pretty creature, dressed in so impertinent and almost indecent a fashion, Mdlle. de Cardoville, who thought she saw in her

a successful rival, felt her indignation, grief, and shame redoubled.

But judge of the surprise and confusion of Adrienne, when Mdlle. Rose-Pompon said to her, with the utmost freedom and pertness, "I am delighted to see you, madame. You and I must have a long talk together. Only I must begin by kissing poor Mother Bunch—with your permission, madame!"

To understand the tone and manner with which this word "madame" was pronounced, you must have been present at some stormy discussion between two Rose-Pompons, jealous of each other; then you would be able to judge how much provoking hostility may be compressed into the word "madame," under certain circumstances. Amazed at the impudence of Rose-Pompon, Mdlle. de Cardoville remained mute; while Agricola, entirely occupied with the interest he took in the work-girl, who had never withdrawn her eyes from him since he entered the room, and with the remembrance of the painful scene he had just quitted, whispered to Adrienne, without remarking the grisette's effrontery, "Alas, lady! it is all over. Cephyse has just breathed her last sigh, without recovering her sense."

"Unfortunate girl!" said Adrienne, with emotion; and for the moment she forgot Rose-Pompon.

"We must keep this sad news from Mother Bunch, and only let her know it hereafter, with great caution," resumed Agricola. "Luckily, little Rose-Pompon knows nothing about it."

And he pointed to the grisette, who was now stooping down by the side of the work-girl. On hearing Agricola speak so familiarly of Rose-Pompon, Adrienne's amazement increased. It is impossible to describe what she felt; yet, strangely enough, her sufferings grew less and less, and her anxiety diminished, as she listened to the chatter of the grisette.

"Oh, my good dear!" said the latter, with as much volubility as emotion, while her pretty blue eyes were filled with tears; "is it possible that you did so stupid a thing? Do not poor people help one another? Could you not apply to me? You knew that others are welcome to whatever is mine, and I would have made a raffle of Philemon's bazaar," added this singular girl, with a burst of feeling, at once sincere, touching, and grotesque; "I would have sold his three boots, pipes, boating-costume, bed, and even his great drinking-

glass, and at all events you should not have been brought to such an ugly pass. Philemon would not have minded, for he is a good fellow; and if he had minded, it would have been all the same. Thank Heaven! we are not married. I am only wishing to remind you that you should have thought of little Rose-Pompon."

"I know you are obliging and kind, miss," said Mother Bunch: for she had heard from her sister that Rose-Pompon, like so many of her class, had a warm and generous heart.

"After all," resumed the grisette, wiping with the back of her hand the tip of her little nose, down which a tear was trickling, "you may tell me that you did not know where I had taken up my quarters. It's a queer story, I can tell you. When I say queer," added Rose-Pompon, with a deep sigh, "it is quite the contrary —but no matter. I need not trouble you with that. One thing is certain; you are getting better—and you and Cephyse will not do such a thing again. She is said to be very weak. Can I not see her yet, M. Agricola?"

"No," said the smith, with embarrassment, for Mother Bunch kept her eyes

fixed upon him; "you must have patience."

"But I may see her to-day, Agricola?" exclaimed the hunchback.

"We will talk about that. Only be calm, I entreat."

"Agricola is right; you must be reasonable, my good dear," resumed Rose-Pompon; "we will wait patiently. I can wait too, for I have to talk presently to this lady;" and Rose-Pompon glanced at Adrienne with the expression of an angry cat. "Yes, yes, I can wait; for I long to tell Cephyse also that she may reckon upon me."

Here Rose-Pompon bridled up very prettily, and thus continued: "Do not be uneasy! It is the least one can do, when one is in a good position, to share the advantages with one's friends, who are not so well off. It would be a fine thing to keep one's happiness to one's self! to stuff it with straw, and put it under a glass, and let no one touch it! When I talk of happiness, it's only to make talk; it is true in one sense; but in another, you see, my good dear—Bah! I am only seventeen—but no matter—I might go on talking till to-morrow, and you would not be any the wiser. So let me kiss you once more,

and don't be down-hearted—nor Cephyse either, do you hear? for I shall be close at hand."

And, stooping still lower, Rose-Pompon cordially embraced Mother Bunch. It is impossible to express what Mdlle. de Cardoville felt during this conversation, or rather during this monologue of the grisette on the subject of the attempted suicide. The eccentric jargon of Mdlle. Rose-Pompon, her liberal facility in disposing of Philemon's bazaar, to the owner of which (as she said) she was luckily not married—the goodness of her heart, which revealed itself in her offers of service—her contrasts, her impertinence, her drollery—all this was so new and inexplicable to Mdlle. de Cardoville that she remained for some time mute and motionless with surprise. Such, then, was the creature to whom Djalma had sacrificed her!

If Adrienne's first impression at sight of Rose-Pompon had been horribly painful, reflection soon awakened doubts, which were to become shortly ineffable hopes. Remembering the interview she had overheard between Rodin and Djalma, when, concealed in the conservatory, she had wished to prove the Jesuit's fidelity, Adrienne asked herself if it was reasonable, if

it was possible to believe, that the prince, whose ideas of love seemed to be so poetical, so elevated, so pure, could find any charm in the disjointed and silly chat of this young girl? Adrienne could not hesitate: she pronounced the thing impossible, from the moment she had seen her rival near, and witnessed her style both of manners and conversation, which, without detracting from the prettiness of her features, gave them a trivial and not very attractive character. Adrienne's doubts with regard to the deep love of the prince for Rose-Pompon were hence soon changed to complete incredulity. Endowed with too much sense and penetration not to perceive that this apparent connection, so inconceivable on the part of Djalma, must conceal some mystery, Mdlle. de Cardoville felt her hopes revive. As this consoling thought arose in her mind, her heart, until now so painfully oppressed, began once more to dilate; she felt vague aspirations toward a better future; and yet, cruelly warned by the past, she feared to yield too readily to a mere illusion, for she remembered the notorious fact that the prince had really appeared in public with this girl. But now that Mdlle. de Cardoville could fully appreciate what she was, she found

the conduct of the prince only the more incomprehensible. And how can we judge soundly and surely of that which is enveloped in mystery? And then a secret presentiment told her that it would, perhaps, be beside the couch of the poor seamstress, whom she had just saved from death, that, by a providential coincidence, she would learn the secret on which depended the happiness of her life.

The emotions which agitated the heart of Adrienne became so violent that her fine face was flushed with a bright red, her bosom heaved, and her large, black eyes, lately dimmed by sadness, once more shone with a mild radiance. She waited with inexpressible impatience for what was to follow. In the interview, with which Rose-Pompon had threatened her, and which a few minutes before Adrienne would have declined with all the dignity of legitimate indignation, she now hoped to find the explanation of a mystery which it was of such importance for her to clear up. After once more tenderly embracing Mother Bunch, Rose-Pompon got up from the ground, and, turning toward Adrienne, eyed her from head to foot with the utmost coolness, and said to her, in a somewhat impertinent tone: "It is now our turn,

madame"—the word "madame" still pronounced with the accent before described —"we have a little matter to settle together."

"I am at your order," answered Adrienne, with much mildness and simplicity.

At sight of the triumphant and decisive air of Rose-Pompon, and on hearing her challenge to Mdlle. de Cardoville, the worthy Agrícola, after exchanging a few words with Mother Bunch, opened his eyes and ears very wide, and remained staring in amazement at the effrontery of the grisette; then, advancing toward her, he whispered, as he plucked her by the sleeve: "I say, are you mad? Do you know to whom you speak?"

"Well! what then? Is not one pretty woman worth another? I say that for the lady. She will not eat me, I suppose," replied Rose-Pompon, aloud, with an air of defiance. "I have to talk with madame, here. I am sure she knows why and wherefore. If not, I will tell her; it will not take me long."

Adrienne, who feared some ridiculous exposure on the subject of Djalma, in the presence of Agricola, made a sign to the latter, and thus answered the grisette:

"I am ready to hear you, miss, but

not in this place. You will understand why."

"Very well, madame. I have my key. You can come to my apartments"—the last word pronounced with an air of ostentatious importance.

"Let us go then to your apartments, miss, since you will do me the honor to receive me there," answered Mdlle. de Cardoville, in her mild, sweet voice, and with a slight inclination of the head so full of exquisite politeness that Rose-Pompon was daunted, notwithstanding all her effrontery.

"What, lady!" said Agricola to Adrienne; "you are good enough—"

"M. Agricola," said Mdlle. de Cardoville, interrupting him, "please to remain with our poor friend: I shall soon be back."

Then, approaching Mother Bunch, who shared in Agricola's astonishment, she said to her: "Excuse me for leaving you a few seconds. Only regain a little strength, and, when I return, I will take you home with me, dear sister."

Then, turning toward Rose-Pompon, who was more and more surprised at hearing so fine a lady call the work-girl her sister, she added: "I am ready whenever you please, mademoiselle."

"Beg pardon, madame, if I go first to show you the way, but it's a regular break-neck sort of a place," answered Rose-Pompon, pressing her elbows to her sides and screwing up her lips, to prove that she was no stranger to polite manners and fine language. And the two rivals quitted the garret together, leaving Agricola alone with Mother Bunch.

Luckily, the disfigured remains of the Bacchanal Queen had been carried into Mother Arsene's subterraneous shop, so that the crowd of spectators, always attracted by any fatal event, had assembled in front of the house; and Rose-Pompon, meeting no one in the little court she had to traverse with Adrienne, continued in ignorance of the tragical death of her old friend Cephyse. In a few moments the grisette and Mdlle. de Cardoville had reached Philemon's apartment. This singular abode remained in the same state of picturesque disorder in which Rose-Pompon had left it, when Ninny Moulin came to fetch her to act the heroine of a mysterious adventure.

Adrienne, completely ignorant of the eccentric modes of life of students and their companions, could not, in spite of the thoughts which occupied her mind, forbear

examining, with a mixture of surprise and curiosity, this strange and grotesque chaos, composed of the most dissimilar objects—disguises for masked balls, skulls with pipes in their mouths, odd boots standing on book-shelves, monstrous bottles, women's clothes, ends of tobacco pipes, etc., etc. To the first astonishment of Adrienne succeeded an impression of painful repugnance. The young lady felt herself uneasy and out of place in this abode, not of poverty, but disorder; while, on the contrary, the sewing-girl's miserable garret had caused her no such feeling.

Rose-Pompon, notwithstanding all her airs, was considerably troubled when she found herself alone with Mdlle. de Cardoville; the rare beauty of the young patrician, her fashionable look, the elegance of her manners, the style, both dignified and affable, with which she had answered the impertinent address of the grisette, began to have their effect upon the latter, who, being moreover a good-natured girl, had been touched at hearing Mdlle. de Cardoville call the hunchback "friend and sister." Without knowing exactly who Adrienne was, Rose-Pompon was not ignorant that she belonged to the richest and highest class of society; she felt al-

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ready some remorse at having attacked her so cavalierly; and her intentions, at first very hostile with regard to Mdlle. de Cardoville, were gradually much modified. Yet, being very obstinate, and not wishing to appear to submit to an influence that offended her pride, Rose-Pompon endeavored to recover her assurance; and, having bolted the door, she said to Adrienne: "Pray do me the favor to sit down, madame"—still with the intention of showing that she was no stranger to refined manners and conversation.

Mdlle. de Cardoville was about mechanically to take a chair, when Rose-Pompon, worthy to practice those ancient virtues of hospitality, which regarded even an enemy as sacred in the person of a guest, cried out hastily: "Don't take that chair, madame; it wants a leg."

Adrienne laid her hand on another chair.

"Nor that, either; the back is quite loose," again exclaimed Rose-Pompon. And she spoke the truth; for the chair-back, which was made in the form of a lyre, remained in the hands of Mdlle. de Cardoville, who said, as she replaced it discreetly in its former position: "I think, miss, that we can very well talk standing."

"As you please, madame," replied Rose-Pompon, steadying herself the more bravely the more uneasy she felt. And the interview of the lady and the grisette began in this fashion.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE INTERVIEW.

After a minute's hesitation, Rose-Pompon said to Adrienne, whose heart was beating violently: "I will tell you directly, madame, what I have on my mind. I should not have gone out of my way to seek you, but, as I happen to fall in with you, it is very natural I should take advantage of it."

"But, miss," said Adrienne, mildly, "may I at least know the subject of the conversation we are to have together?"

"Yes, madame," replied Rose-Pompon, affecting an air of still more decided confidence; "first of all, you must not suppose I am unhappy, or going to make a scene of jealousy, or cry like a forsaken damsel. Do not flatter yourself! Thank Heaven, I have no reason to complain of Prince Charming—that is the pet name I gave him—on the contrary, he has made me

very happy. If I left him, it was against his will, and because I chose."

So saying, Rose-Pompon, whose heart was swelling in spite of her fine airs, could not repress a sigh.

"Yes, madame," she resumed. "I left him because I chose—for he quite doted on me. If I had liked, he would have married me—yes, madame, married me—so much the worse, if that gives you pain. Though, when I say 'so much the worse,' it is true that I meant to pain you. To be sure I did—but then, just now when I saw you so kind to poor Mother Bunch, though I was certainly in the right, still I felt something. However, to cut matters short, it is clear that I detest you, and that you deserve it," added Rose-Pompon, stamping her foot.

From all this it resulted, even for a person much less sagacious than Adrienne, and much less interested in discovering the truth, that Rose-Pompon, notwithstanding her triumphant airs in speaking of him whom she represented as so much attached to her, and even anxious to wed her, was in reality completely disappointed, and was now taking refuge in a deliberate falsehood. It was evident that she was not loved, and that nothing but violent jeal-

ousy had induced her to desire this interview with Mdlle. de Cardoville, in order to make what is vulgarly called a scene, considering Adrienne (the reason will be explained presently) as her successful rival. But Rose-Pompon, having recovered her good-nature, found it very difficult to continue the scene in question, particularly as, for many reasons, she felt overawed by Adrienne.

Though she had expected, if not the singular speech of the grisette, at least something of the same result—for she felt it was impossible that the prince could entertain a serious attachment for this girl—Mdlle. de Cardoville was at first delighted to hear the confirmation of her hopes from the lips of her rival; but suddenly these hopes were succeeded by a cruel apprehension, which we will endeavor to explain. What Adrienne had just heard ought to have satisfied her completely. Sure that the heart of Djalma had never ceased to belong to her, she ought, according to the customs and opinions of the world, to have cared little if, in the effervescence of an ardent youth, he had chanced to yield to some ephemeral caprice for this creature, who was, after all, very pretty and desirable—the more especially as he had now

repaired his error by separating from her.

Notwithstanding these good reasons, such an error of the senses would not have been pardoned by Adrienne. She did not understand that complete separation of the body and soul that would make the one exempt from the stains of the other. She did not think it a matter of indifference to toy with one woman while you were thinking of another. Her young, chaste, passionate love demanded an absolute fealty—a fealty as just in the eyes of Heaven and Nature as it may be ridiculous and foolish in the eyes of man. For the very reason that she cherished a refined religion of the senses, and revered them as an adorable and divine manifestation, Adrienne had all sorts of delicate scruples and nice repugnances, unknown to the austere spirituality of those ascetic prudes who despise vile matter too much to take notice of its errors, and allow it to grovel in filth to show the contempt in which they hold it. Mdlle. de Cardoville was not one of those wonderfully modest creatures who would die of confusion rather than say plainly that they wished for a young and handsome husband, at once ardent and pure. It is true that they generally marry old, ugly, and cor-

rupted men, and make up for it by taking two or three lovers six months after. But Adrienne felt instinctively how much of virginal and celestial freshness there is in the equal innocence of two loving and passionate beings—what guarantees for the future in the remembrance which a man preserves of his first love!

We say, then, that Adrienne was only half-satisfied, though convinced by the vexation of Rose-Pompon that Djalma had never entertained a serious attachment for the grisette.

"And why do you detest me, miss?" said Adrienne, mildly, when Rose-Pompon had finished her speech.

"Oh! bless me, madame!" replied the latter, forgetting altogether her assumption of triumph, and yielding to the natural sincerity of her character; "pretend that you don't know why I detest you? Oh, yes! people go and pick bouquets from the jaws of a panther for people that they care nothing about, don't they? And if it was only that!" added Rose-Pompon, who was gradually getting animated, and whose pretty face, at first contracted into a sullen pout, now assumed an expression of real and yet half-comic sorrow.

"And if it was only the nosegay!" re-

sumed she. "Though it gave me a dreadful turn to see Prince Charming leap like a kid upon the stage, I might have said to myself: 'Pooh! these Indians have their own way of showing politeness. Here, a lady drops her nosegay, and a gentleman picks it up and gives it to her; but in India it is quite another thing; the man picks up the nosegay, and does not return it to the woman—he only kills a panther before her eyes.' Those are good manners in that country, I suppose; but what cannot be good manners anywhere is to treat a woman as I have been treated. And all thanks to you, madame!"

These complaints of Rose-Pompon, at once bitter and laughable, did not at all agree with what she had previously stated as to Djalma's passionate love for her; but Adrienne took care not to point out this contradiction, and said to her, mildly: "You must be mistaken, miss, when you suppose that I had anything to do with your troubles. But, in any case, I regret sincerely that you should have been ill-treated by any one."

"If you think I have been beaten, you are quite wrong," exclaimed Rose-Pompon. "Ah! well, I am sure! No, it is not that. But I am certain that, had it

not been for you, Prince Charming would have got to love me a little. I am worthy the trouble, after all—and then there are different sorts of love—I am not so very particular—not even so much as that," added Rose-Pompon, snapping her fingers.

"Ah!" she continued, "when Ninny Moulin came to fetch me, and brought me jewels and laces to persuade me to go with him, he was quite right in saying there was no harm in his offers."

"Ninny Moulin?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville, becoming more and more interested; "who is this Ninny Moulin, miss?"

"A religious writer," answered Rose-Pompon, pouting; "the right-hand man of a lot of old sacristans, whose money he takes on pretense of writing about morality and religion. A fine morality it is!"

At these words—"a religious writer"—"sacristans"—Adrienne instantly divined some new plot of Rodin or Father d'Aigrigny, of which she and Djalma were to have been the victims. She began vaguely to perceive the real state of the case, as she resumed: "But, miss, under what pretense could this man take you away with him?"

"He came to fetch me, and said I need not fear for my virtue, and was only to make myself look pretty. So I said to my-

self: 'Philemon's out of town, and it's very dull here all alone. This seems a droll affair; what can I risk by it?' Alas! I didn't know what I risked," added Rose-Pompon, with a sigh. "Well! Ninny Moulin takes me away in a fine carriage. We stop in the Place du Palais-Royal. A sullen-looking man, with a yellow face, gets up in the room of Ninny Moulin, and takes me to the house of Prince Charming. When I saw him—lá! he was so handsome, so very handsome, that I was quite dizzy-like; and he had such a kind, noble air that I said to myself: 'Well, there will be some credit if I remain a good girl now!' I did not know what a true word I was speaking. I have been good—oh! worse than good."

"What, miss! do you regret having been so virtuous?"

"Why, you see, I regret, at least, that I have not had the pleasure of refusing. But how can you refuse, when nothing is asked—when you are not even thought worth one little loving word?"

"But, miss, allow me to observe to you that the indifference of which you complain does not seem to have prevented your making a long stay in the house in question."

"How should I know why the prince kept me there, or took me out riding with him, or to the play? Perhaps it is the fashion in his savage country to have a pretty girl by your side, and to pay no attention to her at all!"

"But why, then, did you remain, miss?"

"Why did I remain?" said Rose-Pompon, stamping her foot with vexation. "I remained because, without knowing how it happened, I began to get very fond of Prince Charming; and what is queer enough, I, who am as gay as a lark, loved him because he was so sorrowful, which shows that it was a serious matter. At last, one day, I could hold out no longer. I said: 'Never mind; I don't care for the consequences. Philemon, I am sure, is having his fun in the country.' That set my mind at ease. So one morning, I dress myself in my best, all very pretty, look in my glass, and say: 'Well, that will do—he can't stand that!' and, going to his room, I tell him all that passes through my head; I laugh, I cry—at last I tell him that I adore him. What do you think he answers, in his mild voice, and as cold as a piece of marble? Why, 'Poor child—poor child—poor child!'" added Rose-Pompon, with indignation; "neither more

nor less than if I had come to complain to him of the toothache. But the worst of it is that I am sure, if he were not in love elsewhere, he would be all fire and gunpowder. Only now he is so sad, so dejected!"

Then, pausing a moment, Rose-Pompon added: "No, I will not tell you that; you would be too pleased." But, after another pause, she continued: "Well, never mind; I will tell you, though;" and this singular girl looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with a mixture of sympathy and deference. "Why should I keep it from you? I began by riding the high horse, and saying that the prince wished to marry me; and I finish by confessing that he almost turned me out. Well, it's not my fault; when I try to fib, I am sure to get confused. So, madame, this is the plain truth: When I met you at poor Mother Bunch's, I was at first as angry as a little turkey-cock; but when I heard you, that are such a fine great lady, speak so kindly to the poor girl, and treat her as your sister, do what I would, my anger began to go away. Since we have been here, I have done my utmost to get it up again; but I find it impossible, and the more I see the difference between us, the more I perceive that Prince Charming

was right in thinking so much of you. For you must know, madame, that he is over head and ears in love with you. I don't say so merely because he killed the panther for you at the Porte-Saint-Martin; but if you knew all the tricks he played with your bouquet, and how he will sit up all night weeping in that room where he saw you for the first time—and then your portrait, that he has drawn upon glass, after the fashion of his country, and so many other things—the fact is, that I, who was fond of him, and saw all this, was at first in a great rage; but afterward it was so touching that it brought the tears into my eyes. Yes, madame, just as it does now, when I merely think of the poor prince. Oh, madame!" added Rose-Pompon, her eyes swimming in tears, and with such an expression of sincere interest that Adrienne was much moved by it; "oh, madame, you look so mild and good that you will not make this poor prince miserable. Pray love him a little bit; what can it matter to you?"

So saying, Rose-Pompon, with a perfectly simple, though too familiar, gesture, took hold of Adrienne's hand, as if to enforce her request. It had required great self-command in Mdlle. de Cardoville to

repress the rush of joy that was mounting from her heart to her lips, to check the torrent of questions which she burned to address to Rose-Pompon, and to restrain the sweet tears of happiness that for some seconds had trembled in her eyes; and, strangely enough, when Rose-Pompon took her hand, Adrienne, instead of withdrawing it, pressed the offered hand almost affectionately, and led her toward the window, as if to examine her sweet face more attentively.

On entering the room, the grisette had thrown her bonnet and shawl down upon the bed, so that Adrienne could admire the thick and silky masses of light hair that crowned the fresh face of the charming girl, with its firm, rosy cheeks, its mouth as red as a cherry, and its large blue laughing eyes; and, thanks to the somewhat scanty dress of Rose-Pompon, Adrienne could fully appreciate the various graces of her nymph-like figure. Strange as it may appear, Adrienne was delighted at finding the girl still prettier than she had at first imagined. The stoical indifference of Djalma to so attractive a creature was the best proof of the sincerity of the passion by which he was actuated.

Having taken the hand of Adrienne,

Rose-Pompon was herself confused and surprised at the kindness with which Mdlle. de Cardoville permitted this familiarity. Emboldened by this indulgence, and by the silence of Adrienne, who for some moments had been contemplating her with almost grateful benevolence, the grisette resumed: "Oh, you will not refuse, madame? You will take pity on this poor prince?"

We cannot tell how Adrienne would have answered this indiscreet question of Rose-Pompon, for suddenly a loud, wild, shrill, piercing sound, evidently intended to imitate the crowing of a cock, was heard close to the door of the room.

Adrienne started in alarm; but the countenance of Rose-Pompon, just now so sad, brightened up joyously at this signal, and, clapping her hands, she exclaimed:

"It is Philemon!"

"What—who?" said Adrienne, hastily.

"My lover; oh, the monster! he must have come upstairs on tiptoe, to take me by surprise with his crowing. Just like him!"

A second cock-a-doodle-doo, still louder than the first, was heard close to the door. "What a stupid, droll creature it is! Al-

ways the same joke, and yet it always amuses me," said Rose-Pompon.

And drying her tears with the back of her hand, she began to laugh like one bewitched at Philemon's jest, which, though well known to her, always seemed new and agreeable.

"Do not open the door," whispered Adrienne, much embarrassed; "do not answer, I beg of you."

"Though the door is bolted, the key is on the outside; Philemon can see that there is some one at home."

"No matter—do not let him in."

"But, madame, he lives here; the room belongs to him."

In fact, Philemon, probably growing tired of the little effect produced by his two ornithological imitations, turned the key in the lock, and finding himself unable to open the door, said in a deep bass voice: "What, dearest puss, have you shut yourself in? Are you praying Saint-Flambard for the return of Philly?" (short for Philemon).

Adrienne, not wishing to increase, by prolonging it, the awkwardness of this ridiculous situation, went straight to the door and opened it, to the great surprise of Philemon, who recoiled two or three

steps. Notwithstanding the annoyance of this incident, Mdlle. de Cardoville could not helping smiling at sight of Rose-Pompon's lover, and of the articles he carried in his hand or under his arm.

Philemon was a tall fellow, with dark hair and a very fresh color, and, being just arrived from a journey, he wore a white cap; his thick, black beard flowed down on his sky-blue waistcoat; and a short olive-colored velvet shooting coat, with extravagantly large plaid trousers, completed his costume. As for the accessories, which had provoked a smile from Adrienne, they consisted: first of a portmanteau tucked under his arm, with the head and neck of a goose protruding from it; secondly, of a cage held in his hand, with an enormous white rabbit all alive within it.

"Oh! the darling white rabbit! what pretty red eyes!" Such, it must be confessed, was the first exclamation of Rose-Pompon, though Philemon, to whom it was not addressed, had returned after a long absence; but the student, far from being shocked at seeing himself thus sacrificed to his long-eared companion, smiled complacently, rejoicing at the success of his attempt to please his mistress. All this passed very rapidly. While Rose-

Pompon, kneeling before the cage, was still occupied with her admiration of the rabbit, Philemon, struck with the lofty air of Mdlle. de Cardoville, raised his hand to his cap, and bowed respectfully as he made way for her to pass. Adrienne returned his salutation with politeness, full of grace and dignity, and, lightly descending the stairs, soon disappeared. Dazzled by her beauty, as well as impressed with her noble and lofty bearing, and curious to know how in the world Rose-Pompon had fallen in with such an acquaintance, Philemon said to her, in his amorous jargon: "Dearest puss! tell her Philly who is that fine lady?"

"One of my school-fellows, you great satyr!" said Rose-Pompon, still playing with the rabbit.

Then, glancing at a box, which Philemon deposited close to the cage and the portmanteau, she added: "I'll wager anything you have brought me some more preserves!"

"Philly has brought something better to his dear puss," said the student, imprinting two vigorous kisses on the rosy cheeks of Rose Pompon, who had at length consented to stand up; "Philly has brought her his heart."

"Fudge!" said the grisette, delicately placing the thumb of her left hand on the tip of her nose, and opening the fingers, which she slightly moved to and fro. Philemon answered this provocation by putting his arm round her waist; and then the happy pair shut their door.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SOOTHING WORDS.

DURING the interview of Adrienne with Rose-Pompon a touching scene took place between Agricola and Mother Bunch, who had been much surprised at Mdlle. de Cardoville's condescension with regard to the grisette. Immediately after the departure of Adrienne, Agricola had knelt down beside Mother Bunch, and said to her, with profound emotion: "We are alone, and I can at length—tell you what weighs upon my heart. This act is too cruel—to die of misery and despair, and not to send to me for assistance!"

"Listen to me, Agricola—"

"No, there is no excuse for this. What! we called each other by the names of brother and sister, and for fifteen years gave every proof of sincere affection—and, when the day of misfortune comes, you

quit life without caring for those you must leave behind—without considering that to kill yourself is to tell them they are indifferent to you!"

"Forgive me, Agricola! it is true. I had never thought of that," said the work-girl, casting down her eyes; "but poverty—want of work—"

"Misery! want of work! and was I not here?"

"And despair!"

"But why despair? This generous young lady had received you in her house; she knew your worth, and treated you as her friend—and just at the moment when you had every chance of happiness, you leave the house abruptly, and we remain in the most horrible anxiety on your account."

"I feared—to be—to be a burden to my benefactress," stammered she.

"You a burden to Mdlle. de Cardoville, that is so rich and good!"

"I feared to be indiscreet," said the sewing-girl, more and more embarrassed.

Instead of answering his adopted sister, Agricola remained silent and contemplated her for some moments with an undefinable expression; then he exclaimed suddenly, as if replying to a question put by him-

self: "She will forgive me for disobeying her. I am sure of it."

He next turned toward Mother Bunch, who was looking at him in astonishment, and said to her in a voice of emotion, "I am too frank to keep up this deception. I am reproaching you—blaming you—and my thoughts are quite different."

"How so, Agricola?"

"My heart aches when I think of the evil I have done you."

"I do not understand you, my friend; you have never done me any evil."

"What! never? even in little things? when, for instance, yielding to a detestable habit, I, who loved and respected you as my sister, insulted you a hundred times a day?"

"Insulted me!"

"Yes—when I gave you an odious and ridiculous nickname, instead of calling you properly."

At these words, Mother Bunch looked at the smith in the utmost alarm, trembling lest he had discovered her painful secret, notwithstanding the assurance she had received from Mdlle. de Cardoville. Yet she calmed herself a little when she reflected that Agricola might of himself have thought of the humiliation inflicted

on her by calling her Mother Bunch, and she answered him with a forced smile: "Can you be grieved at so small a thing? It was a habit, Agricola, from childhood. When did your good and affectionate mother, who nevertheless loved me as her daughter, ever call me anything else?"

"And did my mother consult you about my marriage, speak to you of the rare beauty of my bride, beg you to come and see her, and study her character, in the hope that the instinct of your affection for me would warn you—if I made a bad choice? Did my mother have this cruelty? —No; it was I, who thus pierced your heart!"

The fears of the hearer were again aroused; there could be but little doubt that Agricola knew her secret. She felt herself sinking with confusion; yet, making a last effort not to believe the discovery, she murmured in a feeble voice: "True, Agricola! It was not your mother, but yourself, who made me that request—and I was grateful to you for such a mark of confidence."

"Grateful, my poor girl!" cried the smith, while his eyes filled with tears; "no, it is not true. I pained you fearfully

—I was merciless—Heaven knows, without being aware of it!"

"But," said the other, in a voice now almost unintelligible, "what makes you think so?"

"Your love for me!" cried the smith, trembling with emotion, as he clasped Mother Bunch in a brotherly embrace.

"Oh, Heaven!" murmured the unfortunate creature, as she covered her face with her hands, "he knows all."

"Yes, I know all," resumed Agricola, with an expression of ineffable tenderness and respect: "yes, I know all, and I will not have you blush for a sentiment which honors me, and of which I feel so justly proud. Yes, I know all; and I say to myself with joy and pride, that the best, the most noble heart in the world is mine—will be mine always. Come, Magdalen; let us leave shame to evil passions. Raise your eyes, and look at me! You know, if my countenance was ever false—if it ever reflected a feigned emotion. Then look and tell me, if you cannot read in my features how proud I am, Magdalen, how justly proud of your love!"

Overwhelmed with grief and confusion, Mother Bunch had not dared to look on Agricola; but his words expressed so deep

a conviction, the tones of his voice revealed so tender an emotion, that the poor creature felt her shame gradually diminish, particularly when Agricola added, with rising animation: "Be satisfied, my sweet, my noble Magdalen; I will be worthy of this love. Believe me, it shall yet cause you as much happiness as it has occasioned tears. Why should this love be a motive for estrangement, confusion, fear? For what is love, in the sense in which it is held by your generous heart? Is it not a continual exchange of devotion, tenderness, esteem, of mutual and blind confidence?—Why, Magdalen! we may have all this for one another—devotion, tenderness, confidence—even more than in times past; for, on a thousand occasions, your secret inspired you with fear and suspicion—while, for the future, on the contrary, you will see me take such delight in the place I fill in your good and valiant heart, that you will be happy in the happiness you bestow. What I have just said may seem very selfish and conceited; so much the worse! I do not know how to lie."

The longer the smith spoke, the less troubled became Mother Bunch. What she had above all feared in the discovery of her secret was to see it received with

raillery, contempt, or humiliating compassion; far from this, joy and happiness were distinctly visible on the manly and honest face of Agricola. The hunchback knew him incapable of deception; therefore she exclaimed, this time without shame or confusion, but rather with a sort of pride:

"Every sincere and pure passion is so far good and consoling as to end by deserving interest and sympathy, when it has triumphed over its first excess! It is alike honorable to the heart which feels and that which inspires it!—Thanks to you, Agricola—thanks to the kind words, which have raised me in my own esteem—I feel that, instead of blushing, I ought to be proud of this love. My benefactress is right—you are right: why should I be ashamed of it? Is it not a true and sacred love? To be near you, to love you, to tell you so, to prove it by constant devotion, what did I ever desire more? And yet shame and fear, joined with that dizziness of the brain which extreme misery produces, drove me to suicide!—But then some allowance must be made for the suspicions of a poor creature who has been the subject of ridicule from her cradle. So my secret was to die with me, unless some unforeseen accident should reveal it to you;

and, in that case, you are right—sure of myself, sure of you, I ought to have feared nothing. But I may claim some indulgence; mistrust, cruel mistrust of one's self, makes one doubt others also. Let us forget all that. Agricola, my generous brother, I will say to you, as you said to me just now, 'Look at me; you know my countenance cannot lie. Look at me; see if I shun your gaze; see if, ever in my life, I looked so happy—and yet, even now, I was about to die!"

She spoke the truth. Agricola himself could not have hoped so prompt an effect from his words. In spite of the deep traces which misery, grief, and sickness had imprinted on the girl's features, they now shone with radiant happiness and serenity, while her blue eyes, gentle and pure as her soul, were fixed, without embarrassment, on those of Agricola.

"Oh! thanks, thanks!" cried the smith, in a rapture of delight; "when I see you so calm, and so happy, Magdalen, I am indeed grateful."

"Yes, I am calm, I am happy," replied she; "and happy I shall be, for I can now tell you my most secret thoughts. Yes, happy; for this day, which began so fatally, ends like a divine dream. Far from

being afraid, I now look at you with hope and joy. I have again found my generous benefactress, and I am tranquil as to the fate of my poor sister. Oh! shall we not soon see her? I should like her to take part in this happiness."

She seemed so happy that the smith did not dare to inform her of the death of Cephyse, and reserved himself to communicate the same at a more fitting opportunity. Therefore he answered: "Cephyse, being the stronger, has been the more shaken; it will not be prudent, I am told, to see her to-day."

"I will wait then. I can repress my impatience, I have so much to say to you."

"Dear, gentle Magdalen!"

"Oh, my friend!" cried the girl, interrupting Agricola, with tears of joy; "I cannot tell you what I feel, when I hear you call me Magdalen. It is so sweet, so soothing, that my heart expands with delight."

"Poor girl! how dreadfully she must have suffered!" cried the smith, with inexpressible emotion, "when she displays so much happiness, so much gratitude, at being called by her own poor name!"

"But consider, my friend; that word in

your mouth contains a new life for me. If you only knew what hopes, what pleasures, I can now see gleaming in the future! If you knew all the cherished longings of my tenderness! — Your wife, the charming Angela, with her angel-face and angel-soul—oh! in my turn, I can say to you, 'Look at me, and see how sweet that name is to my lips and heart!' Yes, your charming, your good Angela will call me Magdalen—and your children, Agricola, your children!—dear little creatures!—to them also I shall be Magdalen—their good Magdalen—and the love I shall bear them will make them mine, as well as their mother's—and I shall have my part in every maternal care—and they will belong to us three; will they not, Agricola?—Oh! let me, let me weep! These tears without bitterness do me so much good; they are tears that need not be concealed. Thank Heaven! thank you, my friend! those other tears are, I trust, dried forever."

For some seconds this affecting scene had been overlooked by an invisible witness. The smith and Mother Bunch had not perceived Mdlle. de Cardoville standing on the threshold of the door. As Mother Bunch had said, this day, which dawned with all under such fatal auspices,

had become for all a day of ineffable felicity. Adrienne, too, was full of joy, for Djalma had been faithful to her, Djalma loved her with passion. The odious appearances, of which she had been the dupe and victim, evidently formed part of a new plot of Rodin, and it only remained for Mdlle. de Cardoville to discover the end of these machinations.

Another joy was reserved for her. The happy are quick in detecting happiness in others, and Adrienne guessed, by the hunchback's last words, that there was no longer any secret between the smith and the seamstress. She could not therefore help exclaiming, as she entered: "Oh! this will be the brightest day of my life, for I shall not be happy alone!"

Agricola and Mother Bunch turned round hastily. "Lady," said the smith, "in spite of the promise I made you, I could not conceal from Magdalen that I knew she loved me!"

"Now that I no longer blush for this love before Agricola, why should I blush for it before you, lady, that told me to be proud of it, because it is noble and pure?" said Mother Bunch, to whom her happiness gave strength enough to rise and to lean upon Agricola's arm.

"It is well, my friend," said Adrienne, as she threw her arms round her to support her; "only one word, to excuse the indiscretion with which you will perhaps reproach me. If I told your secret to M. Agricola—"

"Do you know why it was, Magdalen?" cried the smith, interrupting Adrienne. "It was only another proof of the lady's delicate generosity. 'I long hesitated to confide to you this secret,' said she to me this morning, 'but I have at length made up my mind to it. We shall probably find your adopted sister; you have been to her the best of brothers; but many times, without knowing it, you have wounded her feelings cruelly—and now that you know her secret, I trust in your kind heart to keep it faithfully, and so spare the poor child a thousand pangs—pangs the more bitter, because they come from you, and are suffered in silence. Hence, when you speak to her of your wife, your domestic happiness, take care not to gall that noble and tender heart.' Yes, Magdalen, these were the reasons that led the lady to commit what she calls an indiscretion."

"I want words to thank you now and ever," said Mother Bunch.

"See, my friend," replied Adrienne,

"how often the designs of the wicked turn against themselves. They feared your devotion to me, and therefore employed that unhappy Florine to steal your journal—"

"So as to drive me from your house with shame, lady, when I supposed my most secret thoughts an object of ridicule to all. There can be no doubt such was their plan," said Mother Bunch.

"None, my child. Well! this horrible wickedness, which nearly caused your death, now turns to the confusion of the criminals. Their plot is discovered—and, luckily, many other of their designs," said Adrienne, as she thought of Rose-Pompon.

Then she resumed, with heartfelt joy: "At last, we are again united, happier than ever, and in our very happiness we shall find new resources to combat our enemies. I say *our* enemies—for all that love me are odious to these wretches. But courage, the hour is come, and the good people will have their turn."

"Thank Heaven, lady," said the smith; "for my part, I shall not be wanting in zeal. What delight to strip them of their mask."

"Let me remind you, M. Baudoin, that you have an appointment for to-morrow with M. Hardy."

"I have not forgotten it, lady, any more than the generous offers I am to convey to him."

"That is nothing. He belongs to my family. Tell him (what indeed I shall write to him this evening), that the funds necessary to reopen his factory are at his disposal; I do not say so for his sake only, but for that of a hundred families reduced to want. Beg him to quit immediately the fatal abode to which they have taken him; for a thousand reasons he should be on his guard against all that surround him."

"Be satisfied, lady. The letter he wrote to me in reply to the one I got secretly delivered to him, was short, affectionate, sad —but he grants me the interview I had asked for, and I am sure I shall be able to persuade him to leave that melancholy dwelling, and perhaps to depart with me, he has always had so much confidence in my attachment."

"Well, M. Baudoin, courage!" said Adrienne, as she threw her cloak over the work-girl's shoulders, and wrapped her round with care. "Let us be gone, for it is late. As soon as we get home, I will give you a letter for M. Hardy, and to-morrow you will come and tell me the result of your visit. No, not to-morrow,"

she added, blushing slightly. "Write to me to-morrow, and the day after, about twelve, come to me."

Some minutes later, the young seamstress, supported by Agricola and Adrienne, had descended the stairs of that gloomy house, and, being placed in the carriage by the side of Mdlle. de Cardoville, she earnestly entreated to be allowed to see Cephyse; it was in vain that Agricola assured her it was impossible, and that she should see her the next day. Thanks to the information derived from Rose-Pompon, Mdlle. de Cardoville was reasonably suspicious of all those who surrounded Djalma, and she therefore took measures, that very evening, to have a letter delivered to the prince by what she considered a sure hand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE TWO CARRIAGES.

It is the evening of the day on which Mdlle. de Cardoville prevented the sewing-girl's suicide. It strikes eleven; the night is dark; the wind blows with violence, and drives along great black clouds, which completely hide the pale luster of the moon. A hackney-coach, drawn by two

broken-winded horses, ascends slowly and with difficulty the slope of the Rue Blanche, which is pretty steep near the barrier, in the part where is situated the house occupied by Djalma.

The coach stops. The coachman, cursing the length of an interminable drive "within the circuit" leading at last to this difficult ascent, turns round on his box, leans over toward the front window of the vehicle, and says in a gruff tone to the person he is driving: "Come! are we almost there? From the Rue de Vaugirard to the Barriere Blanche is a pretty good stretch, I think, without reckoning that the night is so dark that one can hardly see two steps before one—and the street-lamps not lighted because of the moon, which doesn't shine, after all!"

"Look out for a little door with a portico—drive on about twenty yards beyond—and then stop close to the wall," answered a squeaking voice, impatiently, and with an Italian accent.

"Here is a beggarly Dutchman that will make me as savage as a bear!" muttered the angry Jehu to himself. Then he added: "Thousand thunders! I tell you that I can't see. How the devil can I find out your little door?"

"Have you no sense? Follow the wall to the right, brush against it, and you will easily find the little door. It is next to No. 50. If you do not find it, you must be drunk," answered the Italian, with increased bitterness.

The coachman only replied by swearing like a trooper and whipping up his jaded horses. Then, keeping close to the wall, he strained his eyes in trying to read the numbers of the houses, by the aid of his carriage-lamps.

After some moments, the coach again stopped. "I have passed No. 50, and here is a little door with a portico," said the coachman. "Is that the one?"

"Yes," said the voice. "Now go forward some twenty yards, and then stop."

"Well! I never—"

"Then get down from your box, and give twice three knocks at the little door we have just passed—you understand me? —twice three knocks."

"Is that all you give me to drink?" cried the exasperated coachman.

"When you have taken me back to the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where I live, you shall have something handsome, if you do but manage matters well."

"Ha! now the Faubourg Saint-Ger-

main! Only that little bit of distance!" said the driver, with repressed rage. "And I who have winded my horses, wanted to be on the boulevard by the time the play was out. Well, I'm blowed!" Then, putting a good face on his bad luck, and consoling himself with the thought of the promised drink-money, he resumed: "I am to give twice three knocks at the little door?"

"Yes; three knocks first—then a pause—then three other knocks. Do you understand?"

"What next?"

"Tell the person who comes that he is waited for, and bring him here to the coach."

"The devil burn you!" said the coach man to himself, as he turned round on the box, and whipped up his horses, adding: "this crusty old Dutchman has something to do with Freemasons, or, perhaps, smugglers, seeing we are so near the gates. He deserves my giving him in charge, for bringing me all the way from the Rue de Vaugirard."

At twenty steps beyond the little door the coach again stopped, and the coachman descended from the box to execute the orders he had received. Going to the little

door, he knocked three times; then paused, as he had been desired, and then knocked three times more. The clouds, which had hitherto been so thick as entirely to conceal the disk of the moon, just then withdrew sufficiently to afford a glimmering light, so that, when the door opened at the signal, the coachman saw a middle-sized person issue from it, wrapped in a cloak, and wearing a colored cap.

This man carefully locked the door, and then advanced two steps into the street. "They are waiting for you," said the coachman; "I am to take you along with me to the coach."

Preceding the man with the cloak, who only answered him by a nod, he led him to the coach-door, which he was about to open, and to let down the step, when the voice exclaimed from the inside: "It is not necessary. The gentleman may talk to me through the window. I will call you when it is time to start."

"Which means that I shall be kept here long enough to send you to all the devils!" murmured the driver. "However, I may as well walk about, just to stretch my legs."

So saying, he began to walk up and down, by the side of the wall in which was

the little door. Presently he heard the distant sound of wheels, which soon came nearer and nearer, and a carriage, rapidly ascending the slope, stopped on the other side of the little garden-door.

"Come, I say! a private carriage!" said the coachman. "Good horses those, to come up the Rue Blanche at a trot."

The coachman was just making this observation, when, by favor of a momentary gleam of light, he saw a man step from the carriage, advance rapidly to the little door, open it, and go in, closing it after him.

"It gets thicker and thicker!" said the coachman. "One comes out, and the other goes in."

So saying, he walked up to the carriage. It was splendidly harnessed, and drawn by two handsome and vigorous horses. The driver sat motionless, in his great box-coat, with the handle of his whip resting on his right knee.

"Here's weather to drive about in, with such tidy dukes as yours, comrade!" said the humble hackney-coachman to this automaton, who remained mute and impassible, without even appearing to know that he was spoken to.

"He doesn't understand French—he's

an Englishman. One could tell that by his horses," said the coachman, putting this interpretation on the silence of his brother whip. Then, perceiving a tall footman at a little distance, dressed in a long gray livery coat, with blue collar and silver buttons, the coachman addressed himself to him, by way of compensation, but without much varying his phrase: "Here's nice weather to stand about in, comrade!" On the part of the footman he was met with the same imperturbable silence..

"They're both Englishmen," resumed the coachman, philosophically; and, though somewhat astonished at the incident of the little door, he recommenced his walk in the direction of his own vehicle.

While these facts were passing, the man in the cloak and the man with the Italian accent continued their conversation, the one still in the coach, and the other leaning with his hand on the door. It had already lasted for some time, and was carried on in Italian. They were evidently talking of some absent person, as will appear from the following:

"So," said the voice from the coach, "that is agreed to?"

"Yes, my lord," answered the man in

the cloak; "but only in case the eagle should become a serpent."

"And, in the contrary event, you will receive the other half of the ivory crucifix I gave you."

"I shall know what it means, my lord."

"Continue to merit and preserve his confidence."

"I will merit and preserve it, my lord, because I admire and respect this man, who is stronger than the strongest, by craft, and courage, and will. I have knelt before him with humility, as I would kneel before one of the three black idols that stand between Bowanee and her worshipers; for his religion, like mine, teaches to change life into nothingness."

"Humph!" said the voice, in a tone of some embarrassment; "these comparisons are useless and inaccurate. Only think of obeying him, without explaining your obedience."

"Let him speak, and I perform his will! I am in his hands like a corpse, as he himself expresses it. He has seen, he sees every day, my devotion to his interests with regard to Prince Djalma. He has only to say: 'Kill him!'—and this son of a king—"

"For Heaven's sake, do not have such

ideas!" cried the voice, interrupting the man in the cloak. "Thank Heaven, you will never be asked for such proofs of your submission."

"What I am ordered, I do. Bowanee sees me."

"I do not doubt your zeal. I know that you are a loving and intelligent barrier placed between the prince and many guilty interests; and it is because I have heard of that zeal, of your skill in circumventing this young Indian, and, above all, of the motives of your blind devotion, that I have wished to inform you of everything. You are the fanatical worshiper of him you serve. That is well; man should be the obedient slave of the god he chooses for himself."

"Yes, my lord; so long as the god remains a god."

"We understand each other perfectly. As for your recompense, you know what I have promised."

"My lord, I have my reward already."

"How so?"

"I know what I know."

"Very well. Then as for secrecy—"

"You have securities, my lord."

"Yes—and sufficient ones."

"The interest of the cause I serve, my

lord, will alone be enough to secure my zeal and discretion."

"True; you are a man of firm and ardent convictions."

"I strive to be so, my lord."

"And, after all, a very religious man in your way. It is very praiseworthy, in these irreligious times, to have any views at all on such matters—particularly when those views will just enable me to count upon your aid."

"You may count upon it, my lord, for the same reason that the intrepid hunter prefers a jackal to ten foxes, a tiger to ten jackals, a lion to ten tigers, and the welmiss to ten lions."

"What is the welmiss?"

"It is what spirit is to matter, the blade to the scabbard, the perfume to the flower, the head to the body."

"I understand. There never was a more just comparison. You are a man of sound judgment. Always recollect what you have just told me, and make yourself more and more worthy of the confidence of—your idol."

"Will he soon be in a state to hear me, my lord?"

"In two or three days, at most. Yesterday a providential crisis saved his life;

and he is endowed with so energetic a will that his cure will be very rapid."

"Shall you see him again to-morrow, my lord?"

"Yes, before my departure, to bid him farewell."

"Then tell him a strange circumstance, of which I have not been able to inform him, but which happened yesterday."

"What was it?"

"I had gone to the garden of the dead. I saw funerals everywhere, and lighted torches, in the midst of the black night, shining upon tombs. Bowanee smiled in her ebon sky. As I thought of that divinity of destruction, I beheld with joy the dead-cart emptied of its coffins. The immense pit yawned like the mouth of hell; corpses were heaped upon corpses, and still it yawned the same. Suddenly, by the light of a torch, I saw an old man beside me. He wept. I had seen him before. He is a Jew—the keeper of the house in the Rue Saint-Francois—you know what I mean." Here the man in the cloak started.

"Yes, I know; but what is the matter? why do you stop short?"

"Because in that house there has been for a hundred and fifty years the portrait of a man whom I once met in the center

of India, on the banks of the Ganges." And the man in the cloak again paused and shuddered.

"A singular resemblance, no doubt."

"Yes, my lord, a singular resemblance —nothing more."

"But the Jew—the old Jew?"

"I am coming to that, my lord. Still weeping, he said to a grave-digger, 'Well! and the coffin?'—'You were right,' answered the man; 'I found it in the second row of the other grave. It had the figure of a cross on it, formed by seven black nails. But how could you know the place and the mark?'—'Alas! it is no matter,' replied the old Jew, with bitter melancholy. 'You see that I was but too well informed on the subject. But where is the coffin?'—'Behind the great tomb of black marble; I have hidden it there. So make haste; for, in the confusion, nothing will be noticed. You have paid me well, and I wish you to succeed in what you require.' "

"And what did the old Jew do with the coffin marked with the seven black nails?"

"Two men accompanied him, my lord, bearing a covered litter, with curtains drawn round it. He lighted a lantern, and, followed by these two men, went toward the place pointed out by the grave-

JACQUES RENNEPONT.

—The Wandering Jew, Vol, 5, p. 144.

digger. A stoppage, occasioned by the dead-carts, made me lose sight of the old Jew, whom I was following among the tombs. Afterward I was unable to find him."

"It is indeed a strange affair. What could this old Jew want with the coffin?"

"It is said, my lord, that they use dead bodies in preparing their magic charms."

"Those unbelievers are capable of anything — even of holding communication with the Enemy of mankind. However, we will look after this: the discovery may be of importance."

At this instant a clock struck twelve in the distance.

"Midnight! already?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I must be gone. Good-by—but for the last time swear to me that, should matters so turn out, as soon as you receive the other half of the ivory crucifix I have just given you, you will keep your promise."

"I have sworn it by Bowanee, my lord."

"Do not forget that, to make all sure, the person who will deliver to you the other half of the crucifix is to say—come, what is he to say?"

"He is to say, my lord, 'There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.' "

"Very well. Adieu! secrecy and fidelity!"

"Secrecy and fidelity, my lord," answered the man in the cloak.

Some seconds after, the hackney-coach started, carrying with it Cardinal Malipieri, one of the speakers in the above dialogue. The other, whom the reader has no doubt recognized as Faringhea, returned to the little garden-door of the house occupied by Djalma. At the moment he was putting the key into the lock, the door opened, to his great astonishment, and a man came forth. Faringhea rushed upon the unknown, seized him violently by the collar, and exclaimed: "Who are you? whence came you?"

The stranger evidently found the tone of this question anything but satisfactory; for, instead of answering, he struggled to disengage himself from Faringhea's hold, and cried out, in a loud voice:

"Help! Peter!"

Instantly the carriage, which had been standing a few yards off, dashed up at full speed, and Peter, the tall footman, seizing the half-breed by the shoulders, flung him back several paces, and thus made a seasonable diversion in favor of the unknown.

"Now, sir," said the latter to Faringhea, shaking himself, and still protected by the gigantic footman, "I am in a state to answer your questions, though you certainly have a very rough way of receiving an old acquaintance. I am Dupont, ex-bailiff of the estate of Cardoville, and it was I who helped to fish you out of the water, when the ship was wrecked in which you had embarked."

By the light of the carriage-lamps, indeed, the half-caste recognized the good, honest face of Dupont, formerly bailiff, and now house-steward, to Mdlle. de Cardoville. It must not be forgotten that Dupont had been the first to write to Mdlle. de Cardoville, to ask her to interest herself for Djalma, who was then detained at Cardoville Castle by the injuries he had received during the shipwreck.

"But, sir, what is your business here? Why do you introduce yourself clandestinely into this house?" said Faringhea, in an abrupt and suspicious tone.

"I will just observe to you that there is nothing clandestine in the matter. I came here in a carriage, with servants in the livery of my excellent mistress, Mdlle. de Cardoville, charged by her, without any disguise or mystery, to deliver a letter to

Prince Djalma, her cousin," replied Dupont, with dignity.

On these words, Faringhea trembled with mute rage, as he answered: "And why, sir, come at this late hour, and introduce yourself by this little door?"

"I came at this hour, my dear sir, because such was Mdlle. de Cardoville's command, and I entered by this little gate because there is every reason to believe that if I had gone round to the other I should not have been permitted to see the prince."

"You are mistaken, sir," replied the half-caste.

"It is possible; but as we knew that the prince usually passed a good portion of the night in the little saloon, which communicates with the greenhouse, and as Mdlle. de Cardoville had kept a duplicate key of this door, I was pretty certain, by taking this course, to be able to deliver into the prince's own hands the letter from Mdlle. de Cardoville, his cousin—which I have now had the honor of doing, my dear sir; and I have been deeply touched by the kindness with which the prince deigned to receive me and to remember our last interview."

"And who kept you so well informed,

sir, of the prince's habits?" said Faringhea, unable to control his vexation.

"If I have been well informed as to his habits, my dear sir, I have had no such correct knowledge of yours," answered Dupont, with a mocking air; "for I assure you that I had no more notion of seeing you than you had of seeing me."

So saying, M. Dupont bowed with something like mock politeness to the half-caste, and got into the carriage, which drove off rapidly, leaving Faringhea in a state of the utmost surprise and anger.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE APPOINTMENT.

THE morning after Dupont's mission to Prince Djalma, the latter was walking with hasty and impatient step up and down the little saloon, which communicated, as we already know, with the greenhouse from which Adrienne had entered when she first appeared to him. In remembrance of that day, he had chosen to dress himself as on the occasion in question; he wore the same tunic of white cashmere, with a cherry-colored turban, to match with his girdle; his gaiters, of scarlet velvet, embroidered with silver,

displayed the fine form of his leg, and terminated in small white morocco slippers, with red heels. Happiness has so instantaneous, and, as it were, material an influence upon young, lively, and ardent natures, that Djalma, dejected and despairing only the day before, was no longer like the same person. The pale, transparent gold of his complexion was no longer tarnished by a livid hue. His large eyes, of late obscured like black diamonds by a humid vapor, now shone with mild radiance in the center of their pearly setting; his lips, long pale, had recovered their natural color, which was rich and soft as the fine purple flowers of his country.

Ever and anon, pausing in his hasty walk, he stopped suddenly, and drew from his bosom a little piece of paper, carefully folded, which he pressed to his lips with enthusiastic ardor. Then, unable to restrain the expression of his happiness, he uttered a full and sonorous cry of joy, and with a bound he was in front of the plate-glass which separated the saloon from the conservatory, in which he had first seen Mdlle. de Cardoville. By a singular power of remembrance, or marvelous hallucination of a mind possessed by a fixed idea, Djalma had often seen, or fancied he saw,

the adored semblance of Adrienne appear to him through this sheet of crystal. The illusion had been so complete, that, with his eyes ardently fixed on the vision he invoked, he had been able, with the aid of a pencil dipped in carmine, to trace, with astonishing exactness, the profile of the ideal countenance which the delirium of his imagination had presented to his view.* It was before these delicate lines of bright carmine that Djalma now stood in deep contemplation, after perusing, and reperusing, and raising twenty times to his lips, the letter he had received the night before from the hands of Dupont. Djalma was not alone. Faringhea watched all the movements of the prince, with a subtle, attentive, and gloomy aspect. Standing respectfully in a corner of the saloon, the half-caste appeared to be occupied in unfolding and spreading out Djalma's sash, light, silky Indian web, the brown ground of which was almost entirely concealed by the exquisite gold and silver embroidery with which it was overlaid.

The countenance of the half-caste wore

* Some collectors of curiosities possess such sketches, the product of Indian art, distinguished by their primitive simplicity.

a dark and gloomy expression. He could not deceive himself. The letter from Mdlle. de Cardoville, delivered by Dupont to Djalma, must have been the cause of the delight he now experienced; for, without doubt, he knew himself beloved. In that event, his obstinate silence toward Faringhea, ever since the latter had entered the saloon, greatly alarmed the half-caste, who could not tell what interpretation to put upon it. The night before, after parting with Dupont, he had hastened, in a state of anxiety easily understood, to look for the prince, in the hope of ascertaining the effect produced by Mdlle. de Cardoville's letter. But he found the parlor door closed, and when he knocked, he received no answer from within. Then, though the night was far advanced, he had dispatched a note to Rodin, in which he informed him of Dupont's visit and its probable intention. Djalma had indeed passed the night in a tumult of happiness and hope, and a fever of impatience quite impossible to describe. Repairing to his bed-chamber only toward the morning, he had taken a few moments of repose, and had then dressed himself without assistance.

Many times, but in vain, the half-caste had discreetly knocked at the door of Djal-

ma's apartment. It was only in the early part of the afternoon that the prince had rung the bell to order his carriage to be ready by half-past two. Faringhea having presented himself, the prince had given him the order without looking at him, as he might have done to any other of his servants. Was this suspicion, aversion, or mere absence of mind on the part of Djalma? Such were the questions which the half-caste put to himself with growing anguish; for the designs of which he was the most active and immediate instrument might all be ruined by the least suspicion in the prince.

"Oh! the hours—the hours—how slow they are!" cried the young Indian, suddenly, in a low and trembling voice.

"The day before yesterday, my lord, you said the hours were very long," observed Faringhea, as he drew near Djalma in order to attract his attention. Seeing that he did not succeed in this, he advanced a few steps nearer, and resumed: "Your joy seems very great, my lord; tell the cause of it to your poor and faithful servant, that he also may rejoice with you."

If he heard the words, Djalma did not pay any attention to them. He made no

answer, and his large black eyes gazed upon vacancy. He seemed to smile admiringly on some enchanting vision, and he folded his two hands upon his bosom, in the attitude which his countrymen assume at the hour of prayer. After some instants of contemplation, he said: "What o'clock is it?"—but he asked this question of himself, rather than of any third person.

"It will soon be two o'clock, my lord," said Faringhea.

Having heard this answer, Djalma seated himself, and hid his face in his hands, as if completely absorbed in some ineffable meditation. Urged on by his growing anxiety, and wishing at any cost to attract the attention of Djalma, Faringhea approached still nearer to him, and, almost certain of the effect of the words he was about to utter, said to him in a slow and emphatic voice: "My lord, I am sure that you owe the happiness which now transports you to Mdlle. de Cardoville."

Hardly had this name been pronounced, than Djalma started from his chair, looked the half-breed full in the face, and exclaimed, as if only just aware of his presence, "Faringhea! you here!—what is the matter?"

"Your faithful servant shares in your joy, my lord."

"What joy?"

"That which the letter of Mdlle. de Cardoville has occasioned, my lord."

Djalma returned no answer, but his eye shone with so much serene happiness that the half-caste recovered from his apprehensions. No cloud of doubt or suspicion obscured the radiant features of the prince. After a few moments of silence, Djalma fixed upon the half-caste a look half-veiled with a tear of joy, and said to him, with the expression of one whose heart overflows with love and happiness: "Oh! such delight is good—great—like heaven!—for it is heaven which—"

"You deserve this happiness, my lord, after so many sufferings."

"What sufferings! — Oh! yes. I formerly suffered at Java; but that was years ago."

"My lord, this great good fortune does not astonish me. What have I always told you? Do not despair; feign a violent passion for some other woman, and then this proud young lady—"

At these words Djalma looked at the half-caste with so piercing a glance that the latter stopped short; but the prince

said to him with affectionate goodness, "Go on! I listen."

Then, leaning his chin upon his hand, and his elbow on his knee, he gazed so intently on Faringhea, and yet with such unutterable mildness, that even that iron soul was touched for a moment with a slight feeling of remorse.

"I was saying, my lord," he resumed, "that by following the counsels of your faithful slave, who persuaded you to feign a passionate love for another woman, you have brought the proud Mdlle. de Cardoville to come to you. Did I not tell you it would be so?"

"Yes, you did tell me so," answered Djalma, still maintaining the same position, and examining the half-caste with the same fixed and mild attention.

The surprise of Faringhea increased; generally, the prince, without treating him with the least harshness, preserved the somewhat distant and imperious manners of their common country, and he had never before spoken to him with such extreme mildness. Knowing all the evil he had done the prince, and suspicious as the wicked must ever be, the half-caste thought for a moment that his master's

apparent kindness might conceal a snare. He continued, therefore, with less assurance, "Believe me, my lord, this day, if you do but know how to profit by your advantages, will console you for all your troubles, which have indeed been great—for only yesterday, though you are generous enough to forget it, only yesterday you suffered cruelly—but you were not alone in your sufferings. This proud young lady suffered also!"

"Do you think so?" said Djalma.

"Oh! it is quite sure, my lord. What must she not have felt, when she saw you at the theater with another woman!—If she loved you only a little, she must have been deeply wounded in her self-esteem; if she loved you with passion, she must have been struck to the heart. At length, you see, wearied out with suffering, she has come to you."

"So that, any way, she must have suffered—and that does not move your pity?" said Djalma, in a constrained, but still very mild voice.

"Before thinking of others, my lord, I think of your distresses; and they touch me too nearly to leave me any pity for other woes," added Faringhea, hypocritically, so greatly had the influence of Ro-

din already modified the character of the Phansegar.

"It is strange!" said Djalma, speaking to himself, as he viewed the half-caste with a glance still kind, but piercing.

"What is strange, my lord?"

"Nothing. But tell me, since your advice has hitherto prospered so well, what think you of the future?"

"Of the future, my lord?"

"Yes; in an hour I shall be with Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"That is a serious matter, my lord. The whole future will depend upon this interview."

"That is what I was just thinking."

"Believe me, my lord, women never love any so well as the bold man who spares them the embarrassment of a refusal."

"Explain more fully."

"Well, my lord, they despise the timid and languishing lover, who asks humbly for what he might take by force."

"But to-day I shall meet Mdlle. de Cardoville for the first time."

"You have met her a thousand times in your dreams, my lord; and depend upon it, she has seen you also in her dreams, since she loves you. Every one of your amorous thoughts has found an echo in

her heart. All your ardent adorations have been responded to by her. Love has not two languages, and, without meeting, you have said all that you had to say to each other. Now, it is for you to act as her master, and she will be yours entirely."

"It is strange — very strange!" said Djalma, a second time, without removing his eyes from Faringhea's face.

Mistaking the sense which the prince attached to these words, the half-caste resumed: "Believe me, my lord, however strange it may appear, this is the wisest course. Remember the past. Was it by playing the part of a timid lover that you have brought to your feet this proud young lady, my lord? No, it was by pretending to despise her, in favor of another woman. Therefore, let us have no weakness. The lion does not woo like the poor turtle-dove. What cares the sultan of the desert for a few plaintive howls from the lioness, who is more pleased than angry at his rude and wild caresses? Soon submissive, fearful, and happy, she follows in the track of her master. Believe me, my lord—try everything—dare everything—and to-day you will become the adored sultan of this young lady, whose beauty all Paris admires."

After some minutes' silence, Djalma, shaking his head with an expression of tender pity, said to the half-caste, in his mild, sonorous voice: "Why betray me thus? Why advise me thus wickedly to use violence, terror, and surprise, toward an angel of purity, whom I respect as my mother? Is it not enough for you to have been so long devoted to my enemies, whose hatred has followed me from Java?"

Had Djalma sprung upon the half-caste with bloodshot eye, menacing brow, and lifted poniard, the latter would have been less surprised, and perhaps less frightened, than when he heard the prince speak of his treachery in this tone of mild reproach.

He drew back hastily, as if about to stand on his guard. But Djalma resumed, with the same gentleness, "Fear nothing. Yesterday I should have killed you! But to-day happy love renders me too just, too merciful for that. I pity you, without any feeling of bitterness—for you must have been very unhappy, or you could not have become so wicked."

"My lord!" said the half-caste, with growing amazement.

"Yes, you must have suffered much, and met with little mercy, poor creature, to have become so merciless in your hate,

and proof against the sight of a happiness like mine. When I listened to you just now, and saw the sad perseverance of your hatred, I felt the deepest commiseration for you."

"I do not know, my lord—but—" stammered the half-caste, and was unable to find words to proceed.

"Come, now—what harm have I ever done you?"

"None, my lord," answered Faringhea.

"Then why do you hate me thus? why pursue me with so much animosity? Was it not enough to give me the perfidious counsel to feign a shameful love for the young girl that was brought hither, and who quitted the house disgusted at the miserable part she was to play?"

"Your feigned love for that young girl, my lord," replied Faringhea, gradually recovering his presence of mind, "conquered the coldness of—"

"Do not say that," resumed the prince, interrupting him with the same mildness. "If I enjoy this happiness, which makes me compassionate toward you, and raises me above myself, it is because Mdlle. de Cardoville now knows that I have never for a moment ceased to love her as she ought to be loved, with adoration and rev-

erence. It was your intention to have parted us forever, and you had nearly succeeded."

"If you think this of me, my lord, you must look upon me as your most mortal enemy.'

"Fear nothing, I tell you. I have no right to blame you. In the madness of my grief, I listened to you and followed your advice. I was not only your dupe, but your accomplice. Only confess that, when you saw me at your mercy, dejected, crushed, despairing, it was cruel in you to advise the course that might have been most fatal to me."

"The ardor of my zeal may have deceived me, my lord."

"I am willing to believe it. And yet again to-day there were the same evil counsels. You had no more pity for my happiness than for my sorrow. The rapture of my heart inspires you with only one desire—that of changing this rapture into despair."

"I, my lord!"

"Yes, you. It was your intention to ruin me—to dishonor me forever in the eyes of Mdlle. de Cardoville. Now, tell me—why this furious hate? what have I done to you?"

"You misjudge me, my lord—and—"

"Listen to me. I do not wish you to be any longer wicked and treacherous. I wish to make you good. In our country they charm serpents, and tame the wildest tigers. You are a man, with a mind to reason, a heart to love, and I will tame you too by gentleness. This day has bestowed on me divine happiness; you shall have good cause to bless this day. What can I do for you? what would you have—gold? You shall have it. Do you desire more than gold? Do you desire a friend, to console you for the sorrows that made you wicked, and to teach you to be good? Though a king's son, I will be that friend—in spite of the evil—ay, because of the evil you have done me. Yes; I will be your sincere friend, and it shall be my delight to say to myself: 'The day on which I learned that my angel loved me, my happiness was great indeed—for, in the morning, I had an implacable enemy, and, ere night, his hatred was changed to friendship.' Believe me, Faringhea, misery makes crime, but happiness produces virtue. Be happy."

At this moment the clock struck two. The prince started. It was time to go on his visit to Adrienne. The handsome

countenance of Djalma, doubly embellished by the mild, ineffable expression with which it had been animated while he was talking to the half-caste, now seemed illumined with almost divine radiance.

Approaching Faringhea, he extended his hand with the utmost grace and courtesy, saying to him, "Your hand!"

The half-caste, whose brow was bathed with a cold sweat, whose countenance was pale and agitated, seemed to hesitate for an instant; then, overawed, conquered, fascinated, he offered his trembling hand to the prince, who pressed it, and said to him, in their country's fashion, "You have laid your hand honestly in a friend's; this hand shall never be closed against you. Faringhea, farewell! I now feel myself more worthy to kneel before my angel."

And Djalma went out, on his way to the appointment with Adrienne. In spite of his ferocity, in spite of the pitiless hate he bore to the whole human race, the dark sectary of Bowanee was staggered by the noble and clement words of Djalma, and said to himself, with terror, "I have taken his hand. He is now sacred for me."

Then, after a moment's silence, a thought occurred to him, and he exclaimed, "Yes —but he will not be sacred for him who,

according to the answer of last night, waits for him at the door of the house."

So saying, the half-caste hastened into the next room, which looked upon the street, and, raising a corner of the curtain, muttered anxiously to himself, "The carriage moves off — the man approaches. Perdition! it is gone, and I see no more."

CHAPTER XL.

ANXIETY.

By a singular coincidence of ideas, Adrienne, like Djalma, had wished to be dressed exactly in the same costume as at their interview in the house in the Rue Blanche. For the site of this solemn meeting, so important to her future happiness, Adrienne had chosen, with habitual tact, the grand drawing-room of Cardoville House, in which hung many family portraits. The most apparent were those of her father and mother. The room was large and lofty, and furnished, like those which preceded it, with all the imposing splendor of the age of Louis XIV. The ceiling, painted by Lebrun, to represent the Triumph of Apollo, displayed his bold designing and vigorous coloring, in the center of a wide cornice, magnificently carved and gilded,

and supported at its angles by four large gilt figures, representing the Seasons. Huge panels, covered with crimson damask, and set in frames, served as the background to the family portraits which adorned this apartment. It is easier to conceive than describe the thousand conflicting emotions which agitated the bosom of Mdlle. de Cardoville as the moment approached for her interview with Djalma. Their meeting had been hitherto prevented by so many painful obstacles, and Adrienne was so well aware of the vigilant and active perfidy of her enemies, that even now she doubted of her happiness. Every instant, in spite of herself, her eyes wandered to the clock. A few minutes more, and the hour of the appointment would strike. It struck at last. Every reverberation was echoed from the depth of Adrienne's heart. She considered that Djalma's modest reserve had, doubtless, prevented his coming before the moment fixed by herself. Far from blaming this discretion, she fully appreciated it. But, from that moment, at the least noise in the adjoining apartments, she held her breath, and listened with the anxiety of expectation.

For the first few minutes which followed the hour at which she expected Djalma,

Mdlle. de Cardoville felt no serious apprehension, and calmed her impatience by the notion (which appears childish enough to those who have never known the feverish agitation of waiting for a happy meeting), that perhaps the clocks in the Rue Blanche might vary a little from those in the Rue d'Anjou. But when this supposed variation, conceivable enough in itself, could no longer explain a delay of a quarter of an hour, of twenty minutes, of more, Adrienne felt her anxiety gradually increase. Two or three times the young girl rose, with palpitating heart, and went on tip-toe to listen at the door of the saloon. She heard nothing. The clock struck half-past three.

Unable to suppress her growing terror, and clinging to a last hope, Adrienne returned toward the fireplace and rang the bell. After which she endeavored to compose her features, so as to betray no outward sign of emotion. In a few seconds a gray-haired footman, dressed in black, opened the door, and waited in respectful silence for the orders of his mistress. The latter said to him, in a calm voice, "Andrew, request Hebe to give you the smelling-bottle that I left on the chimney-piece in my room, and bring it me here." An-

drew bowed; but just as he was about to withdraw to execute Adrienne's order, which was only a pretext to enable her to ask a question without appearing to attach much importance to it in her servant's eyes, already informed of the expected visit of the prince, Mdlle. de Cardoville added, with an air of indifference, "Pray, is that clock right?"

Andrew drew out his watch, and replied, as he cast his eyes upon it, "Yes, mademoiselle. I set my watch by the Tuileries. It is more than half-past three."

"Very well—thank you!" said Adrienne kindly.

Andrew again bowed; but, before going out, he said to Adrienne, "I forgot to tell you, lady, that Marshal Simon called about an hour ago; but, as you were only to be at home to Prince Djalma, we told him that you received no company."

"Very well," said Adrienne. With another low bow, Andrew quitted the room, and all returned to silence.

For the precise reason that, up to the last minute of the hour previous to the time fixed for her interview with Dalma, the hopes of Adrienne had not been disturbed by the slightest shadow of doubt, the disappointment she now felt was the

more dreadful. Casting a desponding look at one of the portraits placed above her, she murmured, with a plaintive and despairing accent, "Oh, mother!"

Hardly had Mdlle. de Cardoville uttered the words than the windows were slightly shaken by a carriage rolling into the courtyard. The young lady started, and was unable to repress a low cry of joy. Her heart bounded at the thought of meeting Djalma, for this time she felt that he was really come. She was quite as certain of it as if she had seen him. She resumed her seat, and brushed away a tear suspended from her long eyelashes. Her hand trembled like a leaf. The sound of several doors opening and shutting proved that the young lady was right in her conjecture. The gilded panels of the drawing-room door soon turned upon their hinges, and the prince appeared.

While a second footman ushered in Djalma, Andrew placed on a gilded table, within reach of his mistress, a little silver salver, on which stood the crystal smelling-bottle. Then he withdrew, and the door of the room was closed. The prince and Mdlle. de Cardoville were left alone together.

CHAPTER XLI.

ADRIENNE AND DJALMA.

THE prince had slowly approached Mdlle. de Cardoville. Notwithstanding the impetuosity of the Oriental's passions, his uncertain and timid step—timid, yet graceful—betrayed his profound emotion. He did not venture to lift his eyes to Adrienne's face; he had suddenly become very pale, and his finely-formed hands, folded over his bosom in the attitude of adoration, trembled violently. With head bent down, he remained standing at a little distance from Adrienne. This embarrassment, ridiculous in any other person, appeared touching in this prince of twenty years of age, endowed with an almost fabulous intrepidity, and of so heroic and generous a character that no traveler could speak of the son of Kadja-sing without a tribute of admiration and respect. Sweet emotion! chaste reserve! doubly interesting if we consider that the burning passions of this youth were all the more inflammable, because they had hitherto been held in check.

No less embarrassed than her cousin, Adrienne de Cardoville remained seated. Like Djalma, she cast down her eyes; but the burning blush on her cheeks, the quick heaving of her virgin bosom, revealed an emotion that she did not even attempt to hide. Notwithstanding the powers of her mind, by turns gay, graceful, and witty—notwithstanding the decision of her proud and independent character, and her complete acquaintance with the manners of the world—Adrienne shared Djalma's simple and enchanting awkwardness, and partook of that kind of temporary weakness, beneath which these two pure, ardent, and loving beings appeared sinking—as if unable to support the boiling agitation of the senses, combined with the intoxicating excitement of the heart. And yet their eyes had not met. Each seemed to fear the first electric shock of the other's glance—that invincible attraction of two impassioned beings—that sacred fire, which suddenly kindles the blood, and lifts two mortals from earth to heaven; for it is to approach the Divinity, to give one's self up with religious fervor to the most noble and irresistible sentiment that He has implanted within us—the only sentiment that, in His adorable wisdom, the Dispenser of

all good has vouchsafed to sanctify, by endowing it with a spark of His own creative energy.

Djalma was the first to raise his eyes. They were moist and sparkling. The excitement of passionate love, the burning ardor of his age, so long repressed, the intense admiration in which he held ideal beauty, were all expressed in his look, mingled with respectful timidity, and gave to the countenance of this youth an undefinable, irresistible character. Yes, irresistible!—for, when Adrienne encountered his glance, she trembled in every limb, and felt herself attracted by a magnetic power. Already, her eyes were heavy with a kind of intoxicating languor, when, by a great effort of will and dignity, she succeeded in overcoming this delicious confusion, rose from her chair, and said to Djalma in a trembling voice: "Prince, I am happy to receive you here." Then, pointing to one of the portraits suspended above her, she added, as if introducing him to a living person: "Prince—my mother!".

With an instinct of rare delicacy, Adrienne had thus summoned her mother to be present at her interview with Djalma. It seemed a security for herself and the prince against the seductions of a first interview

—which was likely to be all the more perilous that they both knew themselves madly loved, that they both were free, and had only to answer to Providence for the treasures of happiness and enjoyment with which He had so magnificently endowed them. The prince understood Adrienne's thoughts; so that, when the young lady pointed to the portrait, Djalma, by a spontaneous movement full of grace and simplicity, knelt down before the picture, and said to it in a gentle, but manly voice: "I will love and revere you as my mother. And, in thought, my mother too shall be present, and stand like you, beside your child!"

No better answer could have been given to the feeling which induced Mdlle. de Cardoville to place herself, as it were, under the protection of her mother. From that moment, confident in Djalma, confident in herself, the young lady felt more at her ease, and the delicious sense of happiness replaced those exciting emotions which had at first so violently agitated her.

Then, seating herself once more, she said to Djalma, as she pointed to the opposite chair: "Pray take a seat, my dear cousin; and allow me to call you so, for there is too much ceremony in the word prince;

and do you call me cousin also, for I find other names too grave. Having settled this point, we can talk together like old friends."

"Yes, cousin," answered Djalma, blushing.

"And, as frankness is proper between friends," resumed Adrienne, "I have first to make you a reproach," she added, with a half-smile.

The prince had remained standing, with his arm resting on the chimney-piece, in an attitude full of grace and respect.

"Yes, cousin," continued Adrienne, "a reproach, that you will perhaps forgive me for making. I had expected you a little sooner."

"Perhaps, cousin, you may blame me for having come so soon."

"What do you mean?"

"At the moment when I left home, a man, whom I did not know, approached my carriage, and said to me, with such an air of sincerity that I believed him: 'You are able to save the life of a person who has been a second father to you. Marshal Simon is in great danger, and, to rescue him, you must follow me on the instant—' "

"It was a snare," cried Adrienne, hast-

ily. "Marshal Simon was here, scarcely an hour ago."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Djalma, joyfully, and as if he had been relieved from a great weight. "Then there will be nothing to sadden this happy day!"

"But, cousin," resumed Adrienne, "how came you not to suspect this emissary?"

"Some words, which afterward escaped from him, inspired me with doubts," answered Djalma; "but at first I followed him, fearing the marshal might be in danger—for I know that he also has enemies."

"Now that I reflect on it, you were quite right, cousin, for some new plot against the marshal was probable enough; and the least doubt was enough to induce you to go to him."

"I did so—even though you were waiting for me."

"It was a generous sacrifice; and my esteem for you is increased by it, if it could be increased," said Adrienne, with emotion. "But what became of this man?"

"At my desire, he got into the carriage with me. Anxious about the marshal, and in despair at seeing the time wasted that I was to have passed with you, cousin, I pressed him with all sorts of questions. Several times he replied to me with embar-

rassment, and then the idea struck me that the whole might be a snare. Remembering all that they had already attempted, to ruin me in your opinion, I immediately changed my course. The vexation of the man who accompanied me then became so visible that I ought to have had no doubt upon the subject. Still, when I thought of Marshal Simon, I felt a kind of vague remorse, which you, cousin, have now happily set at rest."

"Those people are implacable!" said Adrienne; "but our happiness will be stronger than their hate."

After a moment's silence, she resumed with her habitual frankness: "My dear cousin, it is impossible for me to conceal what I have at heart. Let us talk for a few seconds of the past, which was made so painful to us, and then we will forget it forever, like an evil dream."

"I will answer you sincerely, at the risk of injuring myself," said the prince.

"How could you make up your mind to exhibit yourself in public with—?"

"With that young girl?" interrupted Djalma.

"Yes, cousin," replied Mdlle. de Cardoville, and she waited for Djalma's answer with anxious curiosity.

"A stranger to the customs of this country," said Djalma, without any embarrassment, for he spoke the truth, "with a mind weakened with despair, and misled by the fatal counsels of a man devoted to my enemies, I believed, even as I was told, that, by displaying before you the semblance of another love, I should excite your jealousy, and thus—"

"Enough, cousin; I understand it all," said Adrienne, hastily, interrupting Djalma in her turn, that she might spare him a painful confession. "I too must have been blinded by despair, not to have seen through this wicked plot, especially after your rash and intrepid action. To risk death for the sake of my bouquet!" added Adrienne, shuddering at the mere remembrance. "But one last question," she resumed, "though I am already sure of your answer. Did you receive a letter that I wrote to you, on the morning of the day in which I saw you at the theater?"

Djalma made no reply. A dark cloud passed over his fine countenance, and, for a second, his features assumed so menacing an expression that Adrienne was terrified at the effect produced by her words. But this violent agitation soon passed away,

and Djalma's brow became once more calm and serene.

"I have been more merciful than I thought," said the prince to Adrienne, who looked at him with astonishment. "I wished to come hither worthy of you, my cousin. I pardoned the man who, to serve my enemies, had given me all those fatal counsels. The same person, I am sure, must have intercepted your letter. Just now, at the memory of the evils he thus caused me, I, for a moment, regretted my clemency. But then, again, I thought of your letter of yesterday—and my anger is all gone."

"Then the sad time of fear and suspicion is over—suspicion that made me doubt of your sentiments, and you of mine. Oh, yes! far removed from us be that fatal past!" cried Adrienne de Cardoville, with deep joy.

Then, as if she had relieved her heart from the last thought of sadness, she continued: "The future is all our own—the radiant future, without cloud or obstacle, pure in the immensity of its horizon, and extending beyond the reach of sight!"

It is impossible to describe the tone of enthusiastic hope which accompanied these words. But suddenly Adrienne's features

assumed an expression of touching melancholy, and she added, in a voice of profound emotion: "And yet—at this hour—so many unfortunate creatures suffer pain!"

This simple touch of pity for the misfortunes of others, at the moment when the noble maiden herself attained to the highest point of happiness, had such an effect on Djalma that involuntarily he fell on his knees before Adrienne, clasped his hands together, and turned toward her his fine countenance, with an almost daring expression. Then, hiding his face in his hands, he bowed his head without speaking a single word. There was a moment of deep silence. Adrienne was the first to break it, as she saw a tear steal through the slender fingers of the prince.

"My friend! what is the matter?" she exclaimed, as, with a movement rapid as thought, she stooped forward, and, taking hold of Djalma's hands, drew them from before his face. That face was bathed in tears.

"You weep!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, so much agitated that she kept the hands of Djalma in her own; and, unable to dry his tears, the young Hindoo allowed them to flow like so many drops of crystal over the pale gold of his cheeks.

"There is not in this wide world a happiness like to mine!" said the prince, in his soft, melodious voice, and with a kind of exhaustion; "therefore do I feel great sadness, and so it should be. You give me heaven—and were I to give you the whole earth, it would be but a poor return. Alas! what can man do for a divinity, but humbly bless and adore? He can never hope to return the gifts bestowed; and this makes him suffer—not in his pride—but in his heart!"

Djalma did not exaggerate. He said what he really felt; and the rather hyperbolical form, familiar to Oriental nations, could alone express his thought. The tone of his regret was so sincere, his humility so gentle and full of simplicity, that Adrienne, also moved to tears, answered him with an effusion of serious tenderness, "My friend, we are both at the supreme point of happiness. Our future felicity appears to have no limits, and yet, though derived from different sources, sad reflections have come to both of us. It is, you see, that there are some sorts of happiness which make you dizzy with their own immensity. For a moment, the heart, the mind, the soul, are incapable of containing so much bliss; it overflows and drowns us. Thus

the flowers sometimes hang their heads, oppressed by the too ardent rays of the sun, which is yet their love and life. Oh, my friend! this sadness may be great, but it is also sweet!"

As she uttered these words, the voice of Adrienne grew fainter and fainter, and her head bowed lower, as if she were indeed sinking beneath the weight of her happiness. Djalma had remained kneeling before her, his hands in hers—so that as she thus bent forward her ivory forehead and golden hair touched the amber-colored brow and ebon curls of Djalma. And the sweet, silent tears of the two young lovers flowed together, and mingled as they fell on their clasped hands.

. . . . . .

While this scene was passing in Cardoville House, Agricola had gone to the Rue de Vaugirard, to deliver a letter from Adrienne to M. Hardy.

CHAPTER XLII.

"THE IMITATION."

As we have already said, M. Hardy occupied a pavilion in the "Retreat" annexed to the house in the Rue de Vaugirard, in-

habited by a goodly number of the reverend fathers of the Company of Jesus. Nothing could be calmer and more silent than this dwelling. Every one spoke in whispers, and the servants themselves had something holy in their words, something sanctified in their very walk.

Like all that is subject to the chilling and destructive influences of these men, this mournfully quiet house was entirely wanting in life and animation. The boarders passed an existence of wearisome and icy monotony, only broken by the use of certain devotional exercises, and thus, in accordance with the selfish calculation of the reverend fathers, the mind, deprived of all nourishment and all external support, soon began to droop and pine away in solitude. The heart seemed to beat more slowly, the soul was benumbed, the character weakened; at last, all free will, all power of discrimination, was extinguished, and the boarders, submitting to the same process of self-annihilation as the novices of the Company, became, like them, mere "corpses" in the hands of the brotherhood.

The object of these maneuvers was clear and simple. They secured the means of obtaining all kinds of donations, the constant aim of the skillful policy and merci-

less cupidity of these priests. By the aid of enormous sums, of which they thus become the possessors or the trustees, they follow out and obtain the success of their projects, even though murder, incendiarism, revolt, and all the horrors of civil war, excited by and through them, should drench in blood the lands over which they seek to extend their dark dominion.

Such, then, was the asylum of peace and innocence in which François Hardy had taken refuge. He occupied the ground-floor of a summer-house, which opened upon a portion of the garden. His apartments had been judiciously chosen, for we know with what profound and diabolical craft the reverend fathers avail themselves of material influences to make a deep impression upon the minds they are molding to their purpose. Imagine a prospect bounded by a high wall of a blackish gray, half-covered with ivy, the plant peculiar to ruins. A dark avenue of old yew-trees, so fit to shade the grave with their sepulchral verdure, extended from this wall to a little semicircle, in front of the apartment generally occupied by M. Hardy. Two or three mounds of earth, bordered with box, symmetrically cut, completed the charms of this garden,

which in every respect resembled a cemetery.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon. Though the April sun shone brightly, its rays, intercepted by the high wall of which we have spoken, could not penetrate into that portion of the garden, obscure, damp, and cold as a cavern, which communicated with M. Hardy's apartment. The room was furnished with a perfect sense of the comfortable. A soft carpet covered the floor; thick curtains of dark green baize, the same color as the walls, sheltered an excellent bed, and hung in folds about the glass door, which opened on the garden. Some pieces of mahogany furniture, plain but very clean and bright, stood round the room. Above the secretary, placed just in front of the bed, was a large ivory crucifix, upon a black velvet ground. The chimney-piece was adorned with a clock, in an ebony case, with ivory ornaments representing all sorts of gloomy emblems, such as hour-glasses, scythes, death's-heads, etc. Now imagine this scene in twilight, with its solitary and mournful silence, only broken at the hour of prayer by the lugubrious sound of the bells of the neighboring chapel, and you will recognize the infernal skill with which

these dangerous priests know how to turn to account every external object, when they wish to influence the mind of those they are anxious to gain over.

And this was not all. After appealing to the senses, it was necessary to address themselves to the intellect—and this was the method adopted by the reverend fathers. A single book—but one—was left, as if by chance, within reach. This book was Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation." But as it might happen that M. Hardy would not have the courage or the desire to read this book, thoughts and reflections borrowed from its merciless pages, and written in very large characters, were suspended in black frames close to the bed, or at other parts within sight, so that, involuntarily, in the sad leisure of his inactive dejection, the dweller's eyes were almost necessarily attracted by them. To that fatal circle of despairing thoughts, they confined the already weakened mind of this unfortunate man, so long a prey to the most acute sorrows. What he read mechanically, every instant of the day and night, whenever the blessed sleep fled from his eyes, inflamed with tears, was not enough merely to plunge the soul of the victim into incurable despair, but also to reduce him to the corpse-

like obedience required by the Society of Jesus. In that awful book may be found a thousand terrors to operate on weak minds, a thousand slavish maxims to chain and degrade the pusillanimous soul.

And now imagine M. Hardy carried wounded into this house; while his heart, torn by bitter grief and the sense of horrible treachery, bled even faster than his external injuries. Attended with the utmost care, and thanks to the acknowledged skill of Dr. Baleinier, M. Hardy soon recovered from the hurts he had received when he threw himself into the embers of his burning factory. Yet, in order to favor the projects of the reverend fathers, a drug, harmless enough in its effects, but destined to act for a time upon the mind of the patient, and often employed for that purpose in similar important cases by the pious doctor, was administered to Hardy, and had kept him pretty long in a state of mental torpor.

To a soul agonized by cruel deceptions, it appears an inestimable benefit to be plunged into that kind of torpor, which at least prevents one from dwelling upon the past. Hardy resigned himself entirely to this profound apathy, and at length came to regard it as the supreme good. Thus

do unfortunate wretches, tortured by cruel diseases, accept with gratitude the opiate which kills them slowly, but which at least deadens the sense of pain.

In sketching the portrait of M. Hardy, we tried to give some idea of the exquisite delicacy of his tender soul, of his painful susceptibility with regard to anything base or wicked, and of his extreme goodness, uprightness, and generosity. We now allude to these admirable qualities, because we must observe that with him, as with almost all who possess them, they were not, and could not be, united with an energetic and resolute character. Admirably persevering in good deeds, the influence of this excellent man was insinuating rather than commanding; it was not by the bold energy and somewhat overbearing will, peculiar to other men of great and noble heart, that Hardy had realized the prodigy of his Common Dwelling-house; it was by affectionate persuasion, for with him mildness took the place of force. At sight of any baseness or injustice, he did not rouse himself, furious and threatening; but he suffered intense pain. He did not boldly attack the criminal, but he turned away from him in pity and sorrow. And then his loving heart, so full of feminine delicacy,

had an irresistible longing for the blessed contact of dear affections; they alone could keep it alive. Even as a poor, frail bird dies with the cold, when it can no longer lie close to its brethren, and receive and communicate the sweet warmth of the maternal nest. And now this sensitive organization, this extremely susceptible nature, receives blow after blow from sorrows and deceptions, one of which would suffice to shake, if it did not conquer, the firmest and most resolute character. Hardy's best friend has infamously betrayed him. His adored mistress has abandoned him.

The house which he had founded for the benefit of his workmen, whom he loved as brethren, is reduced to a heap of ashes. What then happens? All the springs of his soul are at once broken. Too feeble to resist such frightful attacks, too fatally deceived to seek refuge in other affections, too much discouraged to think of laying the first stone of any new edifice—this poor heart, isolated from every salutary influence, finds oblivion of the world and of itself in a kind of gloomy torpor. And if some remaining instincts of life and affection, at long intervals, endeavored to rouse themselves within him, and if, half-opening his mind's eye, which he had kept

closed against the present, the past, and the future, Hardy looks around him—what does he see? Only these sentences, so full of terrible despair:

"Thou art nothing but dust and ashes. Grief and tears are thy portion. Believe not in any son of man. There are no such things as friendship or ties of kindred. All human affections are false. Die in the morning, and thou wilt be forgotten before night. Be humble—despise thyself—and let others despise thee. Think not, reason not, live not—but commit thy fate to the hands of a superior, who will think and reason for thee. Weep, suffer, think upon death. Yes, death! always death—that should be thy thought when thou thinkest—but it is better not to think at all. Let a feeling of ceaseless woe prepare thy way to heaven. It is only by sorrow that we are welcome to the terrible God whom we adore!"

Such were the consolations offered to this unfortunate man. Affrighted, he again closed his eyes, and fell back into his lethargy. As for leaving this gloomy retreat, he could not, or rather he did not desire to do so. He had lost the power of will; and then, it must be confessed, he had finished by getting accustomed to this house, and

liked it well—they paid him such discreet attentions, and yet left him so much alone with his grief—there reigned all around such a death-like silence, which harmonized closely with the silence of his heart; and that was now the tomb of his last love, last friendship, last hope. All energy was dead within him! Then began that slow, but inevitable transformation, so judiciously foreseen by Rodin, who directed the whole of this machination, even in its smallest details. At first alarmed by the dreadful maxims which surrounded him, M. Hardy had at length accustomed himself to read them over almost mechanically, just as the captive, in his mournful hours of leisure, counts the nails in the door of his prison, or the bars of the grated window. This was already a great point gained by the reverend fathers.

And soon his weakened mind was struck with the apparent correctness of these false and melancholy aphorisms.

Thus he read:

"Do not count upon the affection of any human creature"—and he had himself been shamefully betrayed.

"Man is born to sorrow and despair"—and he was himself despairing.

"There is no rest save in the cessation of

thought''—and the slumber of his mind had brought some relief to his pain.

Peepholes, skillfully concealed by the hangings and in the wainscoting of these apartments, enabled the reverend fathers at all times to see and hear the boarders, and, above all, to observe their countenance and manner, when they believed themselves to be alone. Every exclamation of grief which escaped Hardy in his gloomy solitude was repeated to Father d'Aigrigny by a mysterious listener. The reverend father, following scrupulously Rodin's instructions, had at first visited his boarder very rarely. We have said that when Father d'Aigrigny wished it he could display an almost irresistible power of charming; and accordingly he threw all his tact and skill into the interviews he had with Hardy, when he came from time to time to inquire after his health. Informed of everything by his spies, and aided by his natural sagacity, he soon saw all the use that might be made of the physical and moral prostration of the boarder. Certain beforehand that Hardy would not take the hint, he spoke to him frequently of the gloom of the house, advising him affectionately to leave it, if he felt oppressed by its monotony, or at all events to seek beyond

its walls for some pleasure and amusement. To speak of pleasure and amusement to this unfortunate man was in his present state to insure a refusal, and so it of course happened. Father d'Aigrigny did not at first try to gain the recluse's confidence, nor did he speak to him of sorrow; but every time he came, he appeared to take such a tender interest in him, and showed it by a few simple and well-timed words. By degrees, these interviews, at first so rare, became more frequent and longer. Endowed with a flow of honeyed, insinuating, and persuasive eloquence, Father d'Aigrigny naturally took for his theme those gloomy maxims, to which Hardy's attention was now so often directed.

Supple, prudent, skillful, knowing that the hermit had hitherto professed that generous natural religion which teaches the grateful adoration of God, the love of humanity, the worship of what is just and good, and which, disdaining dogmas, professes the same veneration for Marcus Aurelius as for Confucius, for Plato as for Christ, for Moses as for Lycurgus—Father d'Aigrigny did not at first attempt to convert him, but began by incessantly reminding him of the abominable deceptions practiced upon him; and, instead of describing

such treachery as an exception in life—instead of trying to calm, encourage, and revive this drooping soul—instead of exhorting Hardy to seek oblivion and consolation in the discharge of his duties toward humanity, toward his brethren, whom he had previously loved and succored—Father d'Aigrigny strove to inflame the bleeding wounds of the unfortunate man, painted the human race in the most atrocious blackness, and, by declaring all men treacherous, ungrateful, wicked, succeeded in rendering his despair incurable. Having attained this object, the Jesuit took another step. Knowing Hardy's admirable goodness of heart, and profiting by the weakened state of his mind, he spoke to him of the consolation to be derived, by a man overwhelmed with sorrow, from the belief that every one of his tears, instead of being unfruitful, was in fact agreeable to God, and might aid in the salvation of souls—the belief, as the reverend father adroitly added, that by faith alone can sorrow be made useful to humanity, and acceptable to Divinity.

Whatever impiety, whatever atrocious Machiavelism there was in these detestable maxims, which make of a loving-kind

Deity a being delighted with the tears of His creatures, was thus skillfully concealed from Hardy's eyes, whose generous instincts were still alive. Soon did this loving and tender soul, whom unworthy priests were driving to a sort of moral suicide, find a mournful charm in the fiction, that his sorrows would at least be profitable to other men. It was at first a fiction; but the enfeebled mind which takes pleasure in such a fable, finishes by receiving it as a reality, and by degrees will submit to the consequences. Such was Hardy's moral and physical state, when, by means of a servant who had been bought over, he received from Agricola Baudoin a letter requesting an interview. Alone, the workman could not have broken the band of the Jesuit's pleadings, but he was accompanied by Gabriel, whose eloquence and reasonings were of a most convincing nature to a spirit like Hardy's.

It is unnecessary to point out to the reader with what dignified reserve Gabriel had confined himself to the most generous means of rescuing Hardy from the deadly influence of the reverend fathers. It was repugnant to the great soul of the young missionary to stoop to a revelation of the odious plots of these priests. He would

only have taken this extreme course had his powerful and sympathetic words failed to have any effect on Hardy's blindness. About a quarter of an hour had elapsed since Gabriel's departure, when the servant appointed to wait on this boarder of the reverend fathers entered and delivered to him a letter.

"From whom is this?" asked Hardy.

"From a boarder in the house, sir," answered the servant, bowing.

This man had a crafty and hypocritical face; he wore his hair combed over his forehead, spoke in a low voice, and always cast down his eyes. Waiting the answer, he joined his hands, and began to twiddle his thumbs. Hardy opened the letter and read as follows:

"SIR—I have only just heard, by mere chance, that you also inhabit this respectable house; a long illness, and the retirement in which I live, will explain my ignorance of your being so near. Though we have only met once, sir, the circumstance which led to that meeting was of so serious a nature, that I cannot think you have forgotten it."

Hardy stopped, and tasked his memory for an explanation, and not finding any-

thing to put him on the right track, he continued to read:

"This circumstance excited in me a feeling of such deep and respectful sympathy for you, sir, that I cannot resist my anxious desire to wait upon you, particularly as I learn that you intend leaving this house to-day—a piece of information I have just derived from the excellent and worthy Abbe Gabriel, one of the men I most love, esteem, and reverence. May I venture to hope, sir, that just at the moment of quitting our common retreat to return to the world, you will deign to receive favorably the request, however intrusive, of a poor old man, whose life will henceforth be passed in solitude, and who cannot therefore have any prospect of meeting you in that vortex of society which he has abandoned forever. Waiting the honor of your answer, I beg you to accept, sir, the assurance of the sentiments of high esteem with which I remain, sir, with the deepest respect,

"Your very humble and most obedient servant, RODIN."

After reading this letter and the signature of the writer, Hardy remained for

some time in deep thought, without being able to recollect the name of Rodin, or to what serious circumstance he alluded.

After a silence of some duration, he said to the servant: "M. Rodin gave you this letter?"

"Yes, sir."

"And who is M. Rodin?"

"A good old gentleman, who is just recovering from a long illness that almost carried him off. Lately, he has been getting better, but he is still so weak and melancholy that it makes one sad to see him. It is a great pity, for there is not a better and more worthy gentleman in the house—unless it be you, sir," added the servant, bowing with an air of flattering respect.

"M. Rodin?" said Hardy, thoughtfully. "It is singular that I should not remember the name, nor any circumstances connected with it."

"If you will give me your answer, sir," resumed the servant, "I will take it to M. Rodin. He is now with Father d'Aigrigny, to whom he is bidding farewell."

"Farewell?"

"Yes, sir, the post-horses have just come."

"Post-horses for whom?"

"For Father d'Aigrigny, sir."

"He is going on a journey, then!" said Hardy, with some surprise.

"Oh! he will not, I think, be long absent," said the servant, with a confidential air, "for the reverend father takes no one with him, and but very light luggage. No doubt, the reverend father will come to say farewell to you, sir, before he starts. But what answer shall I give M. Rodin?"

The letter, just received, was couched in such polite terms—it spoke of Gabriel with so much respect—that Hardy, urged moreover by a natural curiosity, and seeing no motive to refuse this interview before quitting the house, said to the servant: "Please tell M. Rodin that, if he will give himself the trouble to come to me, I shall be glad to see him."

"I will let him know immediately, sir," answered the servant, bowing as he left the room.

When alone, Hardy, while wondering who this M. Rodin could be, began to make some slight preparations for his departure. For nothing in the world would he have passed another night in this house; and, in order to keep up his courage, he recalled every instant the mild, evangelical language of Gabriel, just as the super-

stitious recite certain litanies, with the view of escaping from temptation.

The servant soon returned, and said: "M. Rodin is here, sir."

"Beg him to walk in."

Rodin entered, clad in his long black dressing-gown, with his old silk cap in his hand. The servant then withdrew. The day was just closing. Hardy rose to meet Rodin, whose features he did not at first distinguish. But, as the reverend father approached the window, Hardy looked narrowly at him for an instant, and then uttered an exclamation, wrung from him by surprise and painful remembrance. But, recovering himself from this first movement, Hardy said to the Jesuit, in an agitated voice: "You here, sir? Oh, you are right! It was indeed a very serious circumstance that first brought us together."

"Oh, my dear sir!" said Rodin, in a kindly and unctuous tone; "I was sure you would not have forgotten me."

CHAPTER XLIII.

PRAYER.

It will doubtless be remembered that Rodin had gone (although a stranger to

Hardy) to visit him at his factory, and inform him of De Blessac's shameful treachery—a dreadful blow, which had only preceded by a few moments a second no less horrible misfortune; for it was in the presence of Rodin that Hardy had learned the unexpected departure of the woman he adored. Painful to him must have been the sudden appearance of Rodin. Yet, thanks to the salutary influence of Gabriel's counsels, he recovered himself by degrees, and the contraction of his features being succeeded by a melancholy calm, he said to Rodin: "I did not indeed expect to meet you, sir, in this house."

"Alas, sir!" answered Rodin, with a sigh, "I did not expect to come hither, probably to end my days beneath this roof, when I went, without being acquainted with you, but only as one honest man should serve another, to unveil to you a great infamy."

"Indeed, sir, you then rendered me a true service; perhaps, in that painful moment, I did not fully express my gratitude; for, at the same moment in which you revealed to me the treachery of Monsieur de Blessac—"

"You were overwhelmed by another piece of painful intelligence," said Rodin,

interrupting M. Hardy; "I shall never forget the sudden arrival of that poor woman, who, pale and affrighted, and without considering my presence, came to inform you that a person who was exceedingly dear to you had quitted Paris abruptly."

"Yes, sir; and, without stopping to thank you, I set out immediately," answered Hardy, with a mournful air.

"Do you know, sir," said Rodin, after a moment's silence, "that there are sometimes very strange coincidences?"

"To what do you allude, sir?"

"While I went to inform you that you were betrayed in so infamous a manner—I was myself—"

Rodin paused, as if unable to control his deep emotion, and his countenance wore the expression of such overpowering grief that Hardy said to him with interest: "What ails you, sir?"

"Forgive me," replied Rodin, with a bitter smile. "Thanks to the ghostly counsels of the angelic Abbe Gabriel, I have reached a sort of resignation. Still there are certain memories which affect me with the most acute pain. I told you," resumed Rodin, in a firmer voice, "or was going to tell you, that the very day after

that on which I informed you of the treachery practiced against you, I was myself the victim of a frightful deception. An adopted son—a poor unfortunate child whom I had brought up—" He paused again, drew his trembling hand over his eyes, and added: "Pardon me, sir, for speaking of matters which must be indifferent to you. Excuse the intrusive sorrow of a poor, broken-hearted old man!"

"I have suffered too much myself, sir, to be indifferent to any kind of sorrow," replied Hardy. "Besides, you are no stranger to me—for you did me a real service—and we both agree in our veneration for the same young priest."

"The Abbe Gabriel!" cried Rodin, interrupting Hardy; "ah, sir! he is my deliverer, my benefactor. If you knew all his care and devotion, during my long illness, caused by intense grief—if you knew the ineffable sweetness of his counsels—"

"I know them, sir," cried Hardy; "oh, yes! I know how salutary is the influence."

"In his mouth, sir, the precepts of religion are full of mildness," resumed Rodin, with excitement. "Do they not heal and console? do they not make us love and hope, instead of fear and tremble?"

"Alas, sir! in this very house," said Hardy, "I have been able to make the comparison."

"I was happy enough," said Rodin, "to have the angelic Abbe Gabriel for my confessor, or, rather, my confidant."

"Yes," replied Hardy, "for he prefers confidence to confession."

"How well you know him!" said Rodin, in a tone of the utmost simplicity. Then he resumed: "He is not a man, but an angel. His words would convert the most hardened sinner. Without being exactly impious, I had myself lived in the profession of what is called Natural Religion; but the angelic Abbe Gabriel has, by degrees, fixed my wavering belief, given it body and soul, and, in fact, endowed me with faith."

"Yes! he is a truly Christian priest—a priest of love and pardon!" cried Hardy.

"What you say is perfectly true," replied Rodin; "for I came here almost mad with grief, thinking only of the unhappy boy who had repaid my paternal goodness with the most monstrous ingratitude, and sometimes I yielded to violent bursts of despair, and sometimes sunk into a state of mournful dejection, cold as the grave itself. But, suddenly, the Abbe Gabriel

appeared—and the darkness fled before the dawning of a new day."

"You were right, sir; there are strange coincidences," said Hardy, yielding more and more to the feeling of confidence and sympathy, produced by the resemblance of his real position to Rodin's pretended one. "And to speak frankly," he added, "I am very glad I have seen you before quitting this house. Were I capable of falling back into fits of cowardly weakness, your example alone would prevent me. Since I listen to you, I feel myself stronger in the noble path which the angelic Abbe Gabriel has opened before me, as you so well express it."

"The poor old man will not then regret having listened to the first impulse of his heart, which urged him to come to you," said Rodin, with a touching expression. "You will sometimes remember me in that world to which you are returning?"

"Be sure of it, sir; but allow me to ask one question: You remain, you say, in this house?"

"What would you have me do? There reigns here a calm repose, and one is not disturbed in one's prayers," said Rodin, in a very gentle tone. "You see, I have suffered so much—the conduct of that un-

happy youth was so horrible—he plunged into such shocking excesses — that the wrath of Heaven must be kindled against him. Now I am very old, and it is only by passing the few days that are left me in fervent prayer that I can hope to disarm the just anger of the Lord. Oh! prayer —prayer! It was the Abbe Gabriel who revealed to me all its power and sweetness —and therewith the formidable duties it imposes."

"Its duites are indeed great and sacred," answered Hardy, with a pensive air.

"Do you remember the life of Rancey?" said Rodin, abruptly, as he darted a peculiar glance at Hardy.

"The founder of La Trappe?" said Hardy, surprised at Rodin's question. "I remember hearing a very vague account, some time ago, of the motives of his conversion."

"There is, mark you, no more striking an example of the power of prayer, and of the state of almost divine ecstasy to which it may lead a religious soul. In a few words, I will relate to you this instructive and tragic history. Rancey—but I beg your pardon; I fear I am trespassing on your time."

"No, no," answered Hardy, hastily;

"you cannot think how interested I am in what you tell me. My interview with the Abbe Gabriel was abruptly broken off, and in listening to you I fancy that I hear the further development of his views. Go on, I conjure you."

"With all my heart. I only wish that the instruction which, thanks to our angelic priest, I derived from the story of Rancey, might be as profitable to you as it was to me."

"This, then, also came from the Abbe Gabriel?"

"He related to me this kind of parable in support of his exhortations," replied Rodin. "Oh, sir! do I not owe to the consoling words of that young priest all that has strengthened and revived my poor old broken heart?".

"Then I shall listen to you with a double interest."

"Rancey was a man of the world," resumed Rodin, as he looked attentively at Hardy; "a gentleman — young, ardent, and handsome. He loved a young lady of high rank. I cannot tell what impediments stood in the way of their union. But this love, though successful, was kept secret, and every evening Rancey visited his mistress by means of a private stair-

case. It was, they say, one of those passionate loves which men feel but once in their lives. The mystery, even the sacrifice made by the unfortunate girl, who forgot every duty, seemed to give new charms to this guilty passion. In the silence and darkness of secrecy, these two lovers passed two years of voluptuous delirium, which amounted almost to ecstasy."

At these words Hardy started. For the first time of late his brow was suffused with a deep blush; his heart throbbed violently; he remembered that he too had once known the ardent intoxication of a guilty and hidden love. Though the day was closing rapidly, Rodin cast a sidelong glance at Hardy, and perceived the impression he had made. "Sometimes," he continued, "thinking of the dangers to which his mistress was exposed, if their connection should be discovered, Rancey wished to sever these delicious ties; but the girl, beside herself with passion, threw herself on the neck of her lover, and threatened him, in the language of intense excitement, to reveal and to brave all, if he thought of leaving her. Too weak and loving to resist the prayers of his mistress, Rancey again and again yielded, and they both gave themselves up to a torrent of

delight, which carried them along, forgetful of earth and heaven."

M. Hardy listened to Rodin with feverish and devouring avidity. The Jesuit, in painting, with these almost sensual colors, an ardent and secret love, revived in Hardy burning memories, which till now had been drowned in tears. To the beneficent calm produced by the mild language of Gabriel had succeeded a painful agitation, which, mingled with the reaction of the shocks received that day, began to throw his mind into a strange state of confusion.

Rodin, having so far succeeded in his object, continued as follows: "A fatal day came at last. Rancey, obliged to go to the wars, quitted the girl; but, after a short campaign, he returned, more in love than ever. He had written privately, to say he would arrive almost immediately after his letter. He came accordingly. It was night. He ascended, as usual, the private staircase which led to the chamber of his mistress; he entered the room, his heart beating with love and hope. His mistress had died that morning!"

"Ah!" cried Hardy, covering his face with his hands, in terror.

"She was dead," resumed Rodin. "Two wax candles were burning beside the funeral

couch. Rancey could not, would not, believe that she was dead. He threw himself on his knees by the corpse. In his delirium, he seized that fair, beloved head to cover it with kisses. The head parted from the body and remained in his hands! Yes," resumed Rodin, as Hardy drew back, pale and mute with terror, "yes, the girl had fallen a victim to so swift and extraordinary a disease, that she had not been able to receive the last sacraments. After her death, the doctors, in the hope of discovering the cause of this unknown malady, had begun to dissect that fair form—"

As Rodin reached this part of his narrative, night was almost come. A sort of hazy twilight alone reigned in this silent chamber, in the center of which appeared the pale and ghastly from of Rodin, clad in his long black gown, while his eyes seemed to sparkle with diabolic fire. Overcome by the violent emotions occasioned by this story, in which thoughts of death and voluptuousness, love and horror, were so strangely mingled, Hardy remained fixed and motionless, waiting for the words of Rodin, with a combination of curiosity, anguish, and alarm.

"And Rancey?" said he, at last, in an

agitated voice, while he wiped the cold sweat from his brow.

"After two days of furious delirium," resumed Rodin, "he renounced the world, and shut himself up in impenetrable solitude. The first period of his retreat was frightful; in his despair he uttered loud yells of grief and rage that were audible at some distance; twice he attempted suicide, to escape from the terrible visions."

"He had visions, then?" said Hardy, with an increased agony of curiosity.

"Yes," replied Rodin in a solemn tone, "he had fearful visions. He saw the girl who, for his sake, had died in mortal sin, plunged in the heat of the everlasting flames of hell! On that fair face, disfigured by infernal tortures, was stamped the despairing laugh of the damned! Her teeth gnashed with pain; her arms writhed in anguish! She wept tears of blood, and, with agonized and avenging voice, she cried to her seducer: 'Thou art the cause of my perdition—my curse, my curse be upon thee!'"

As he pronounced these last words, Rodin advanced three steps nearer to Hardy, accompanying each step with a menacing gesture. If we remember the state of

weakness, trouble, and fear, in which M. Hardy was—if we remember that the Jesuit had just roused in the soul of this unfortunate man all the sensual and spiritual memories of a love, cooled, but not extinguished, in tears—if we remember, too, that Hardy reproached himself with the seduction of a beloved object, whom her departure from her duties might (according to the Catholic faith) doom to everlasting flames—we shall not wonder at the terrible effect of this phantasmagoria, conjured up in silence and solitude, in the evening dusk, by this fearful priest.

The effect on Hardy was indeed striking, and the more dangerous that the Jesuit, with diabolical craft, seemed only to be carrying out, from another point of view, the ideas of Gabriel. Had not the young priest convinced Hardy that nothing is sweeter than to ask of Heaven forgiveness for those who have sinned, or whom we have led astray? But forgiveness implies punishment; and it was to the punishment alone that Rodin drew the attention of his victim, by painting it in these terrific hues. With hands clasped together, and eye fixed and dilated, Hardy trembled in all his limbs, and seemed still listening to Rodin, though the latter had ceased to

speak. Mechanically, he repeated: "My curse, my curse be upon thee!"

Then suddenly he exclaimed, in a kind of frenzy: "The curse is on me also! The woman, whom I taught to forget her sacred duties, and to commit mortal sin—one day—plunged in the everlasting flames—her arms writhing in agony—weeping tears of blood—will cry to me from the bottomless pit: 'My curse, my curse be upon thee!'—One day," he added, with redoubled terror, "one day?—who knows? perhaps at this moment!—for if the sea voyage had been fatal to her—if a shipwreck—oh, God! she too would have died in mortal sin—lost, lost, forever!—Oh, have mercy on her, my God! Crush me in Thy wrath—but have mercy on her—for I alone am guilty!"

And the unfortunate man, almost delirious, sunk with clasped hands upon the ground.

"Sir," cried Rodin, in an affectionate voice, as he hastened to lift him up, "my dear sir—my dear friend—be calm! Comfort yourself. I cannot bear to see you despond. Alas! my intention was quite the contrary to that."

"The curse! the curse! yes, she will curse me also—she, that I loved so much

—in the everlasting flames!" murmured Hardy, shuddering, and apparently insensible to the other's words.

"But, my dear sir, listen to me, I entreat you," resumed the latter; "let me finish my story, and then you will find it as consoling as it now seems terrible. For Heaven's sake, remember the adorable words of our angelic Abbe Gabriel, with regard to the sweetness of prayer."

At the name of Gabriel, Hardy recovered himself a little, and exclaimed, in a heartrending tone: "Ay! his words were sweet and beneficent. Where are they now? For mercy's sake, repeat to me those consoling words."

"Our angelic Abbe Gabriel," resumed Rodin, "spoke to you of the sweetness of prayer—"

"Oh, yes! prayer!"

"Well, my dear sir, listen to me, and you shall see how prayer saved Rancey, and made a saint of him. Yes, these frightful torments, that I have just described, these threatening visions, were all conquered by prayer, and changed into celestial delights."

"I beg of you," said Hardy, in a faint voice, "speak to me of Gabriel, speak to me of heaven—but no more flames—no

more hell—where sinful women weep tears of blood—"

"No, no," replied Rodin; and even as, in describing hell, his tone had been harsh and threatenig, it now became warm and tender, as he uttered the following words: "No, we will have no more images of despair—for, as I have told you, after suffering infernal tortures, Rancey, thanks to the power of prayer, enjoyed the delights of paradise."

"The delights of paradise!" repeated Hardy, listening with anxious attention.

"One day, at the height of his grief, a priest, a good priest—another Abbe Gabriel—came to Rancey. Oh, happiness! oh, providential change! In a few days he taught the sufferer the sacred mysteries of prayer—that pious intercession of the creature, addressed to the Creator, in favor of a soul exposed to the wrath of Heaven. Then Rancey seemed transformed. His grief was at once appeased. He prayed; and the more he prayed, the greater was his hope. He felt that God listened to his prayer. Instead of trying to forget his beloved, he now thought of her constantly, and prayed for her salvation. Happy in his obscure cell, alone with that adored remembrance, he passed days and nights in

praying for her—plunged in an ineffable, burning, I had almost said amorous ecstasy."

It is impossible to give an idea of the tone of almost sensual energy with which Rodin pronounced the word "amorous." Hardy started, changing from hot to cold. For the first time, his weakened mind caught a glimpse of the fatal pleasures of asceticism, and of that deplorable catalepsy, described in the lives of St. Theresa, St. Aubierge, and others.

Rodin perceived the other's thoughts, and continued: "Oh! Rancey was not now the man to content himself with a vague, passing prayer, uttered in the whirl of the world's business, which swallows it up, and prevents it from reaching the ear of Heaven. No, no; in the depths of solitude he endeavored to make his prayers even more efficacious, so ardently did he desire the eternal salvation of his mistress."

"What did he do then—oh! what did he do in his solitude?" cried Hardy, who was now powerless in the hands of the Jesuit.

"First of all," said Rodin, with a slight emphasis, "he became a monk."

"A monk!" repeated Hardy, with a pensive air.

"Yes," resumed Rodin, "he became a

monk, because his prayers were thus more likely to be favorably accepted. And then, as in solitude our thoughts are apt to wander, he fasted, and mortified his flesh, and brought into subjection all that was carnal within him, so that, becoming all spirit, his prayers might issue like a pure flame from his bosom, and ascend like the perfume of incense to the throne of the Most High!"

"Oh! what a delicious dream!" cried Hardy, more and more under the influence of the spell; "to pray for the woman we have adored, and to become spirit—perfume—light!"

"Yes; spirit, perfume, light!" said Rodin, with emphasis. "But it is no dream. How many monks, how many hermits, like Rancey, have, by prayers, and austerity, and macerations, attained a divine ecstasy! and if you only knew the celestial pleasures of such ecstasies!—Thus, after he became a monk, the terrible dreams were succeeded by enchanting visions. Many times, after a day of fasting, and a night passed in prayers and macerations, Rancey sunk down exhausted on the floor of his cell! Then the spirit freed itself from the vile clogs of matter. His senses were absorbed in pleasure; the sound of

heavenly harmony struck upon his ravished ear; a bright, mild light, which was not of this world, dawned upon his half-closed eyes; and, at the height of the melodious vibrations of the golden harps of the Seraphim, in the center of a glory, compared to which the sun is pale, the monk beheld the image of that beloved woman—"

"Whom by his prayers he had at length rescued from the eternal flames?" said Hardy, in a trembling voice.

"Yes, herself," replied Rodin, with eloquent enthusiasm, for this monster was skilled in every style of speech. "Thanks to the prayers of her lover, which the Lord had granted, this woman no longer shed tears of blood — no longer writhed her beautiful arms in the convulsions of infernal anguish. No, no; still fair—oh! a thousand times fairer than when she dwelt on earth—fair with the everlasting beauty of angels—she smiled on her lover with ineffable ardor, and, her eyes beaming with a mild radiance, she said to him in a tender and passionate voice: 'Glory to the Lord! glory to thee, O my beloved! Thy prayers and austerities have saved me. I am numbered among the chosen. Thanks, my beloved, and glory!'—And therewith,

radiant in her felicity, she stooped to kiss, with lips fragrant with immortality, the lips of the enraptured monk—and their souls mingled in that kiss, burning as love, chaste as divine grace, immense as eternity!"

"Oh!" cried Hardy, completely beside himself; "a whole life of prayer, fasting, torture, for such a moment—with her, whom I mourn—with her, whom I have perhaps led to perdition!"

"What do you say? such a moment!" cried Rodin, whose yellow forehead was bathed in sweat, like that of a magnetizer, and who now took Hardy by the hand, and drew still closer, as if to breathe into him the burning delirium; "it was not once in his religious life—it was almost every day, that Rancey, plunged in divine ecstasy, enjoyed these delicious, ineffable, superhuman pleasures, which are to the pleasures of earth what eternity is to man's existence!"

Seeing, no doubt, that Hardy was now at the point to which he wished to bring him, and the night being almost entirely come, the reverend father coughed two or three times in a significant manner, and looked toward the door. At this moment, Hardy, in the height of his frenzy, ex-

claimed, with a supplicating voice: "A cell—a tomb—and the Ecstatic Vision!"

The door of the room opened, and Father d'Aigrigny entered, with a cloak under his arm. A servant followed him, bearing a light.

. . . . . .

About ten minutes after this scene a dozen robust men, with frank, open countenances, led by Agricola, entered the Rue de Vaugirard, and advanced joyously toward the house of the reverend fathers. It was a deputation from the former workmen of M. Hardy. They came to escort him, and to congratulate him on his return among them. Agricola walked at their head. Suddenly he saw a carriage with post-horses issuing from the gateway of the house. The postilion whipped up the horses, and they started at full gallop. Was it chance or instinct?—the nearer the carriage approached the group of which he formed a part, the more did Agricola's heart sink within him.

The impression became so vivid that it was soon changed into a terrible apprehension; and at the moment when the vehicle, which had its blinds down, was about to pass close by him, the smith, in obedience to a resistless impulse, exclaimed, as he

rushed to the horses' heads: "Help, friends! stop them!"

"Postilion! ten louis if you ride over him!" cried from the carriage the military voice of Father d'Aigrigny.

The cholera was still raging. The postilion had heard of the murder of the poisoners. Already frightened at the sudden attack of Agricola, he struck him a heavy blow on the head with the butt of his whip, which stretched him senseless on the ground. Then, spurring with all his might, he urged his three horses into a triple gallop, and the carriage rapidly disappeared, while Agricola's companions, who had neither understood his actions nor the sense of his words, crowded around the smith and did their best to revive him.

CHAPTER XLIV.

REMEMBRANCES.

OTHER events took place a few days after the fatal evening in which M. Hardy, fascinated and misled by the deplorable, mystic jargon of Rodin, had implored Father d'Aigrigny on his knees to remove him far from Paris, into some deep solitude, where he might devote himself to a life of prayer and ascetic austerities. Mar-

shal Simon, since his arrival in Paris, had occupied, with his two daughters, a house in the Rue des Trois-Freres. Before introducing the reader into this modest dwelling, we are obliged to recall to his memory some preceding facts. The day of the burning of Hardy's factory, Marshal Simon had come to consult with his father on a question of the highest importance, and to communicate to him his painful apprehensions on the subject of the growing sadness of his twin daughters, which he was unable to explain.

Marshal Simon held in religious reverence the memory of the Great Emperor. His gratitude to the hero was boundless, his devotion blind, his enthusiasm founded upon reason, his affection warm as the most sincere and passionate friendship. But this was not all.

One day the Emperor, in a burst of joy and paternal tenderness, had led the marshal to the cradle of the sleeping King of Rome, and said to him, as he pointed to the beautiful child: "My old friend, swear to me that you will serve the son as you have served the father!"

Marshal Simon took and kept that vow. During the Restoration, the chief of a military conspiracy in favor of Napoleon II.,

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he had attempted in vain to secure a regiment of cavalry, at that time commanded by the Marquis d'Aigrigny. Betrayed and denounced, the marshal, after a desperate duel with the future Jesuit, had succeeded in reaching Poland, and thus escaping a sentence of death. It is useless to repeat the series of events which led the marshal from Poland to India, and then brought him back to Paris after the Revolution of July—an epoch at which a number of his old comrades in arms had solicited and obtained from the government, without his knowledge, the confirmation of the rank and title which the Emperor had bestowed upon him just before Waterloo.

On his return to Paris, after his long exile, in spite of all the happiness he felt in at length embracing his children, Marshal Simon was deeply affected on learning the death of their mother, whom he adored. Till the last moment, he had hoped to find her in Paris. The disappointment was dreadful, and he felt it cruelly, though he sought consolation in his children's affection.

But soon new causes of trouble and anxiety were interwoven with his life by the machinations of Rodin. Thanks to the secret intrigues of the reverend father

at the courts of Rome and Vienna, one of his emissaries, in a condition to inspire full confidence, and provided with undeniable evidence to support his words, went to Marshal Simon, and said to him: "The son of the Emperor is dying, the victim of the fears with which the name of Napoleon still inspires Europe.

"From this slow expiring, you, Marshal Simon, one of the Emperor's most faithful friends, are able to rescue this unfortunate prince.

"The correspondence in my hand proves that it would be easy to open relations, of the surest and most secret nature, with one of the most influential persons about the King of Rome, and this person would be disposed to favor the prince's escape.

"It is possible, by a bold, unexpected stroke, to deliver Napoleon II. from the custody of Austria, which would leave him to perish by inches in an atmosphere that is fatal to him.

"The enterprise may be a rash one, but it has chances of success that you, Marshal Simon, more than any other, could change into certainties; for your devotion to the Emperor is well known, and we remember with what adventurous audacity you conspired, in 1815, in favor of Napoleon II."

The state of languor and decline of the King of Rome was then in France a matter of poblic notoriety. People even went so far as to affirm that the son of the hero was carefully trained by priests, who kept him in complete ignorance of the glory of his paternal name; and that, by the most execrable machinations, they strove day by day to extinguish every noble and generous instinct that displayed itself in the unfortunate youth. The coldest hearts were touched and softened at the story of so sad and fatal a destiny. When we remember the heroic character and the chivalrous loyalty of Marshal Simon, and his passionate devotion to the Emperor, we can understand how the father of Rose and Blanche was more interested than any one else in the fate of the young prince, and how, if occasion offered, he would feel himself obliged not to confine his efforts to mere regrets. With regard to the reality of the correspondence produced by Rodin's emissary, it had been submitted by the marshal to a searching test, by means of his intimacy with one of his old companions in arms, who had been for a long period on a mission to Vienna, in the time of the Empire. The result of this investigation, conducted with as much

prudence as address, so that nothing should transpire, showed that the marshal might give his serious attention to the advances made him.

Hence, this proposition threw the father of Rose and Blanche into a cruel perplexity; for, to attempt so bold and dangerous an enterprise, he must once more abandon his children; while, on the contrary, if, alarmed at this separation, he renounced the endeavor to save the King of Rome, whose lingering death was perfectly true and well authenticated, the marshal would consider himself as false to the vow he had sworn to the Emperor. To end these painful hesitations, full of confidence in the inflexible uprightness of his father's character, the marshal had gone to ask his advice; unfortunately, the old republican workman, mortally wounded during the attack on M. Hardy's factory, but still pondering over the serious communication of his son, died with these words upon his lips: "My son, you have a great duty to perform, under pain of not acting like a man of honor, and of disobeying my last will. You must, without hesitation—"

But, by a deplorable fatality, the last words, which would have completed the sense of the old workman's thought, were

spoken in so feeble a voice as to be quite unintelligible. He died, leaving Marshal Simon in a worse state of anxiety, as one of the two courses open to him had now been formally condemned by his father, in whose judgment he had the most implicit and merited confidence. In a word, his mind was now tortured by the doubt whether his father had intended, in the name of honor and duty, to advise him not to abandon his children to engage in so hazardous an enterprise, or whether, on the contrary, he had wished him to leave them for a time to perform the vow made to the Emperor, and endeavor at least to rescue Napoleon II. from a captivity that might soon be mortal.

This perplexity, rendered more cruel by certain circumstances to be related hereafter, the tragical death of his father, who had expired in his arms; the incessant and painful remembrance of his wife, who had perished in a land of exile; and finally, the grief he felt at perceiving the ever-growing sadness of Rose and Blanche, occasioned severe shocks to Marshal Simon. Let us add that, in spite of his natural intrepidity, so nobly proved by twenty years of war, the ravages of the cholera, the same terrible malady to which his wife had fallen a

victim in Siberia, filled the marshal with involuntary dread. Yes, this man of iron nerves, who had coolly braved death in so many battles, felt the habitual firmness of his character give way at sight of the scenes of desolation and mourning which Paris offered at every step. Yet, when Mdlle. de Cardoville gathered round her the members of her family, to warn them against the plot of their enemies, the affectionate tenderness of Adrienne for Rose and Blanche appeared to exercise so happy an influence on their mysterious sorrow that the marshal, forgetting for a moment his fatal regrets, thought only of enjoying this blessed change, which, alas! was but of short duration. Having now recalled these facts to the mind of the reader, we shall continue our story.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE BLOCKHEAD.

We have stated that Marshal Simon occupied a small house in the Rue des Trois-Freres. Two o'clock in the afternoon had just struck in the marshal's sleeping chamber, a room furnished with military simplicity. In the recess, in which stood the bed, hung a trophy composed of the arms

used by the marshal during his campaigns. On the secretary opposite was a small bronze bust of the Emperor, the only ornament of the apartment. Out of doors the temperature was far from warm, and the marshal had become susceptible to cold during his long residence in India. A good fire therefore blazed upon the hearth. A door, concealed by the hangings, and leading to a back staircase, opened slowly, and a man entered the chamber. He carried a basket of wood, and advanced leisurely to the fireplace, before which he knelt down, and began to arrange the logs symmetrically in a box that stood beside the hearth. After some minutes occupied in this manner, still kneeling, he gradually approached another door, at a little distance from the chimney, and appeared to listen with deep attention, as if he wished to hear what was passing in the next room.

This man, employed as an inferior servant in the house, had the most ridiculously stupid look that can be imagined. His functions consisted in carrying wood, running errands, etc. In other respects he was a kind of laughing-stock to the other servants. In a moment of good-humor, Dagobert, who filled the post of major-

domo, had given this idiot the name of "Loony" (lunatic), which he had retained ever since, and which he deserved in every respect, as well for his awkwardness and folly as for his unmeaning face, with its grotesquely flat nose, sloping chin, and wide, staring eyes. Add to this description a jacket of red stuff, and a triangular white apron, and we must acknowledge that the simpleton was quite worthy of his name.

Yet, at the moment when Loony listened so attentively at the door of the adjoining room, a ray of quick intelligence animated for an instant his dull and stupid countenance.

When he had thus listened for a short time, Loony returned to the fireplace, still crawling on his knees; then rising, he again took his basket, half full of wood, and once more approaching the door at which he had listened, knocked discreetly. No one answered. He knocked a second time, and more loudly. Still there was the same silence.

Then he said, in a harsh, squeaking, laughable voice, "Ladies, do you want any wood, if you please, for your fire?"

Receiving no answer, Loony placed his basket on the ground, opened the door gently, and entered the next room, after

casting a rapid glance around. He came out again in a few seconds, looking from side to side with an anxious air, like a man who had just accomplished some important and mysterious task.

Taking up his basket, he was about to leave Marshal Simon's room, when the door of the private staircase was opened slowly and with precaution, and Dagobert appeared.

The soldier, evidently surprised at the servant's presence, knitted his brows, and exclaimed abruptly, "What are you doing here?"

At this sudden interrogation, accompanied by a growl expressive of the ill-humor of Spoilsport, who followed close on his master's heels, Loony uttered a cry of real or pretended terror. To give, perhaps, an appearance of greater reality to his dread, the supposed simpleton let his basket fall on the ground, as if astonishment and fear had loosened his hold of it.

"What are you doing, numskull?" resumed Dagobert, whose countenance was impressed with deep sadness, and who seemed little disposed to laugh at the fellow's stupidity.

"Oh, M. Dagobert! how you frighten me! Dear me! what a pity I had not an

armful of plates, to prove it was not my fault if I broke them all."

"I ask you what you are doing," resumed the soldier.

"You see, M. Dagobert," replied Loony, pointing to his basket, "that I came with some wood to master's room, so that he might burn it, if it was cold—which it is."

"Very well. Pick up your wood, and begone!"

"Oh, M. Dagobert! my legs tremble under me. How you did scare me, to be sure!"

"Will you begone, brute?" resumed the veteran; and seizing Loony by the arm, he pushed him toward the door, while Spoilsport, with recumbent ears, and hair standing up like quills of a porcupine, seemed inclined to accelerate his retreat.

"I am going, M. Dagobert, I am going," replied the simpleton, as he hastily gathered up his basket; "only please to tell the dog—"

"Go to the devil, you stupid chatterbox," cried Dagobert, as he pushed Loony through the doorway.

Then the soldier bolted the door which led to the private staircase, and going to that which communicated with the apartments of the two sisters, he double-locked

can it be? It is hardly possible to be the letters, they are too infamous; he despises them. And yet— But no, no—he is above that!"

And Dagobert again began to walk with hasty steps. Suddenly, Spoilsport pricked up his ears, turned his head in the direction of the staircase door, and growled hoarsely. A few seconds after, some one knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" said Dagobert. There was no answer, but the person knocked again. Losing patience, the soldier went hastily to open it, and saw the servant's stupid face.

"Why don't you answer when I ask who knocks!" said the soldier, angrily.

"M. Dagobert, you sent me away just now, and I was afraid of making you cross, if I said I had come again."

"What do you want? Speak then—come in, stupid!" cried the exasperated Dagobert, as he pulled him into the room.

"M. Dagobert, don't be angry—I'll tell you all about it—it is a young man."

"Well?"

"He wants to speak to you directly, M. Dagobert."

"His name?"

"His name, M. Dagobert?" replied

Loony, rolling about and laughing with an idiotic air.

"Yes, his name. Speak, idiot!"

"Oh, M. Dagobert! it's all in joke that you ask me his name!"

"You are determined, fool that you are, to drive me out of my senses!" cried the soldier, seizing Loony by the collar. "The name of this young man!"

"Don't be angry, M. Dagobert. I didn't tell you the name, because you know it."

"Beast!" said Dagobert, shaking his fist at him.

"Yes, you do know it, M. Dagobert, for the young man is your own son. He is downstairs, and wants to speak to you directly—yes, directly.

The stupidity was so well assumed that Dagobert was the dupe of it. Moved to compassion rather than anger by such imbecility, he looked fixedly at the servant, shrugged his shoulders, and said, as he advanced toward the staircase, "Follow me!"

Loony obeyed; but, before closing the door he drew a letter secretly from his pocket, and dropped it behind him without turning his head, saying all the while to Dagobert, for the purpose of occupying his attention, "Your son is in the court, M.

Dagobert. He would not come up—that's why he is still downstairs!"

Thus talking, he closed the door, believing he had left the letter on the floor of Marshal Simon's room. But he had reckoned without Spoilsport. Whether he thought it more prudent to bring up the rear, or from respectful deference for a biped, the worthy dog had been the last to leave the room, and, being a famous carrier, as soon as he saw the letter dropped by Loony, he took it delicately between his teeth, and followed close on the heels of the servant, without the latter perceiving this new proof of the intelligence and sagacity of Spoilsport.

CHAPTER XLVI.

ANONYMOUS LETTERS.

We will explain presently what became of the letter, which Spoilsport held between his teeth, and why he left his master, when the latter ran to meet Agricola. Dagobert had not seen his son for some days. Embracing him cordially, he led him into one of the rooms on the ground-floor, which he usually occupied. "And how is your wife?" said the soldier to his son.

"She is well, father, thank you."

Perceiving a great change in Agricola's countenance, Dagobert resumed, "You look sad. Has anything gone wrong since I saw you last?"

"All is over, father. We have lost him," said the smith, in a tone of despair.

"Lost whom?"

"M. Hardy."

"M. Hardy!—why, three days ago, you told me you were going to see him."

"Yes, father, I have seen him—and my dear brother Gabriel saw him and spoke to him—how he speaks! with a voice that comes from the heart!—and he had so revived and encouraged him that M. Hardy consented to return among us. Then I, wild with joy, ran to tell the good news to some of my mates, who were waiting to hear the result of my interview with M. Hardy. I brought them all with me, to thank and bless him. We were within a hundred yards of the house belonging to the black-gowns—"

"Ah, the black-gowns!" said Dagobert, with a gloomy air. "Then some mischief will happen. I know them."

"You are not mistaken, father," answered Agricola, with a sigh. "I was running on with my comrades, when I saw a carriage coming toward us. Some

presentiment told me that they were taking away M. Hardy."

"By force!" said Dagobert, hastily.

"No," answered Agricola, bitterly; "no—the priests are too cunning for that. They know how to make you an accomplice in the evil they do you. Shall I not always remember how they managed with my good mother?"

"Yes, the worthy woman! there was a poor fly caught in the spider's web. But this carriage of which you speak?"

"On seeing it start from the house of the black-gowns," replied Agricola, "my heart sunk within me; and, by an impulse stronger than myself, I rushed to the horses' heads, calling on my comrades to help me. But the postilion knocked me down and stunned me with a blow from his whip. When I recovered my senses, the carriage was already far away."

"You were not hurt?" cried Dagobert, anxiously, as he examined his son from top to toe.

"No, father; a mere scratch."

"What did you next, my boy?"

"I hastened to our good angel, Mdlle. de Cardoville, and told her all. 'You must follow M. Hardy on the instant,' said she to me. 'Take my carriage and post-horses.

Dupont will accompany you; follow M. Hardy from stage to stage, should you succeed in overtaking him, your presence and your prayers may perhaps conquer the fatal influence that these priests have acquired over him.' "

"It was the best advice she could give you. That excellent young lady is always right."

"An hour after, we were upon our way, for we learned by the returned postilions that M. Hardy had taken the Orleans road. We followed him as far as Etampes. There we heard that he had taken a cross-road to reach a solitary house in a valley about four leagues from the highway. They told us that this house, called the Val-de-St. Herem, belonged to certain priests, and that, as the night was so dark, and the road so bad, we had better sleep at the inn, and start early in the morning. We followed this advice, and set out at dawn. In a quarter of an hour, we quitted the high road for a mountainous and desert track. We saw nothing but brown rocks, and a few birch trees. As we advanced, the scene became wilder and wilder. We might have fancied ourselves a hundred leagues from Paris. At last we stopped in front of a large, old, black-looking house,

with only a few small windows in it, and built at the foot of a high, rocky mountain. In my whole life, I have never seen anything so deserted and sad. We got out of the carriage, and I rang the bell. A man opened the door. 'Did not the Abbe d'Aigrigny arrive here last night with a gentleman?' said I to this man, with a confidential air. 'Inform the gentleman directly that I come on business of importance, and that I must see him forthwith.'—The man, believing me an accomplice, showed us in immediately; a moment after the Abbe d'Aigrigny opened the door, saw me, and drew back; yet, in five minutes more, I was in the presence of M. Hardy."

"Well?" said Dagobert, with interest.

Agricola shook his head sorrowfully, and replied: "I knew by the very countenance of M. Hardy that all was over. Addressing me in a mild but firm voice, he said to me: 'I understand, I can even excuse, the motives that bring you hither. But I am quite determined to live henceforth in solitude and prayer. I take this resolution freely and voluntarily, because I would fain provide for the salvation of my soul. Tell your fellows that my arrangements will be such as to leave them

THE MAN WITH THE WEASEL FACE

—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 5, p. 240.

a good remembrance of me.'—And as I was about to speak, M. Hardy interrupted me, saying: 'It is useless, my friend. My determination is unalterable. Do not write to me, for your letters would remain unanswered. Prayer will henceforth be my only occupation. Excuse me for leaving you, but I am fatigued from my journey!' —He spoke the truth, for he was as pale as a specter, with a kind of wildness about the eyes, and so changed since the day before, as to be hardly the same man. His hand, when he offered it on parting from me, was dry and burning. The Abbe d'Aigrigny soon came in. 'Father,' said M. Hardy to him, 'have the goodness to see M. Baudoin to the door.'—So saying, he waved his hand to me in token of farewell, and retired to the next chamber. All was over; he is lost to us forever."

"Yes," said Dagobert, "those black-gowns have enchanted him, like so many others."

"In despair," resumed Agricola, "I returned hither with M. Dupont. This, then, is what the priests have made of M. Hardy—of that generous man, who supported nearly three hundred industrious workmen in order and happiness, increasing their knowledge, improving

their hearts, and earning the benediction of that little people, of which he was the providence. Instead of all this, M. Hardy is now forever reduced to a gloomy and unavailing life of contemplation."

"Oh, the black-gowns!" said Dagobert, shuddering, and unable to conceal a vague sense of fear. "The longer I live, the more I am afraid of them. You have seen what those people did to your poor mother; you see what they have just done to M. Hardy; you know their plots against my two poor orphans, and against that generous young lady. Oh, these people are very powerful! I would rather face a battalion of Russian grenadiers, than a dozen of these cassocks. But don't let's talk of it! I have causes enough besides for grief and fear."

Then, seeing the astonished look of Agricola, the soldier, unable to restrain his emotion, threw himself into the arms of his son, exclaiming, with a choking voice: "I can hold out no longer. My heart is too full. I must speak; and whom shall I trust, if not you?"

"Father, you frighten me!" said Agricola. "What is the matter?"

"Why, you see, had it not been for you and the two poor girls, I should have blown

out my brains twenty times over—rather than see what I see—and dread what I do."

"What do you dread, father?"

"Since the last few days, I do not know what has come over the marshal—but he frightens me."

"Yet, in his last interviews with Mdlle. de Cardoville—"

"Yes, he was a little better. By her kind words, this generous young lady poured balm into his wounds; the presence of the young Indian cheered him; he appeared to shake off his cares, and his poor little girls felt the benefit of the change. But for some days, I know not what demon has been loosed against this family. It is enough to turn one's head. First of all, I am sure that the anonymous letters have begun again."

"What letters, father?"

"The anonymous letters."

"But what are they about?"

"You know how the marshal hated that renegade, the Abbe d'Aigrigny. When he found that the traitor was here, and that he had persecuted the two orphans, even as he persecuted their mother to the death—but that now he had become a priest—I thought the marshal would have

gone mad with indignation and fury. He wished to go in search of the renegade. With one word, I calmed him. 'He is a priest,' I said; 'you may do what you will, insult, or strike him—he will not fight. He began by serving against his country, he ends by becoming a bad priest. It is all in character. He is not worth spitting upon.' — 'But surely I may punish the wrong done to my children, and avenge the death of my wife,' cried the marshal, much exasperated. — 'They say, as you well know, that there are courts of law to avenge your wrongs,' answered I; 'Mdlle. de Cardoville has lodged a charge against the renegade, for having attempted to confine your daughters in a convent. We must champ the bit, and wait.' "

"Yes," said Agricola, mournfully, "and unfortunately there lacks proof to bring it home to the Abbe d'Aigrigny. The other day, when I was examined by Mdlle. de Cardoville's lawyer, with regard to our attempt on the convent, he told me that we should meet with obstacles at every step, for want of legal evidence, and that the priests had taken their precautions with so much skill that the indictment would be quashed."

"That is just what the marshal thinks,

my boy, and this increases his irritation at such injustice."

"He should despise the wretches."

"But the anonymous letters!"

"Well, what of them, father?"

"You shall know all. A brave and honorable man like the marshal, when his first moment of indignation was over, felt that to insult the renegade disguised in the garb of a priest, would be like insulting an old man or a woman. He determined therefore to despise him, and to forget him as soon as possible. But then, almost every day, there came by the post anonymous letters, in which all sorts of devices were employed, to revive and excite the anger of the marshal against the renegade, by reminding him of all the evil contrived by the Abbe d'Aigrigny against him and his family. The marshal was reproached with cowardice for not taking vengeance on this priest, the persecutor of his wife and children, the insolent mocker at his misfortunes."

"And from whom do you suspect these letters to come, father?"

"I cannot tell—it is that which turns one's brain. They must come from the enemies of the marshal, and he has no enemies but the black-gowns."

"But, father, since these letters are to excite his anger against the Abbe d'Aigrigny, they can hardly have been written by priests."

"This is what I have said to myself."

"But what, then, can be their object?"

"Their object? oh, it is too plain!" cried Dagobert. "The marshal is hasty, ardent; he has a thousand reasons to desire vengeance on the renegade. But he cannot do himself justice, and the other sort of justice fails him. Then what does he do? He endeavors to forget, he forgets. But every day there comes to him an insolent letter, to provoke and exasperate his legitimate hatred by mockeries and insults. Devil take me! my head is not the weakest—but, at such a game, I should go mad."

"Father, such a plot would be horrible, and only worthy of hell!"

"And that is not all."

"What more?"

"The marshal has received other letters; those he has not shown me—but, after he had read the first, he remained like a man struck motionless, and murmured to himself: 'They do not even respect that—oh! it is too much—too much!'—And, hiding his face in his hands, he wept."

"The marshal wept!" cried the blacksmith, hardly able to believe what he heard.

"Yes," answered Dagobert, "he wept like a child."

"And what could these letters contain, father?"

"I did not venture to ask him, he appeared so miserable and dejected."

"But, thus harassed and tormented incessantly, the marshal must lead a wretched life."

"And his poor little girls, too! he sees them grow sadder and sadder, without being able to guess the cause. And the death of his father, killed almost in his arms! Perhaps you will think all this enough; but, no! I am sure there is something still more painful behind. Lately, you would hardly know the marshal. He is irritable about nothing, and falls into such fits of passion that—" After a moment's hesitation, the soldier resumed: "I may tell this to you, my poor boy. I have just been upstairs, to take the caps from his pistols."

"What, father!" cried Agricola; "you fear—"

"In the state of exasperation in which I saw him yesterday there is everything to fear."

"What then happened?"

"Since some time he has often long secret interviews with a gentleman, who looks like an old soldier and worthy man. I have remarked that the gloom and agitation of the marshal are always redoubled after one of these visits. Two or three times I have spoken to him about it; but I saw by his look that I displeased him, and therefore I desisted.

"Well! yesterday, this gentleman came in the evening. He remained here till eleven o'clock, and his wife came to fetch him, and waited for him in a coach. After his departure, I went up to see if the marshal wanted anything. He was very pale, but calm; he thanked me, and I came down again. You know that my room is just under his. I could hear the marshal walking about, as if much agitated, and soon after he seemed to be knocking down the furniture. In alarm, I once more went upstairs. He asked me, with an irritated air, what I wanted, and ordered me to leave the room. Seeing him in that way, I remained; he grew more angry, still I remained; perceiving a chair and table thrown down, I pointed to them with so sad an air that he understood me. You know that he has the best heart in the

world, so, taking me by the hand, he said to me: 'Forgive me for causing you this uneasiness, my good Dagobert; but just now I lost my senses, and gave way to a burst of absurd fury; I think I should have thrown myself out of the window had it been open. I only hope that my poor dear girls have not heard me,' added he, as he went on tip-toe to open the door which communicates with his daughters' bedroom. When he had listened anxiously for a moment, he returned to me, and said: 'Luckily, they are asleep.' Then I asked him what was the cause of his agitation, and if, in spite of my precautions, he had received any more anonymous letters. 'No,' replied he, with a gloomy air; 'but leave me, my friend. I am now better. It has done me good to see you. Good-night, old comrade! go downstairs to bed.' I took care not to contradict him; but, pretending to go down, I came up again, and seated myself on the top stair, listening. No doubt, to calm himself entirely, the marshal went to embrace his children, for I heard him open and shut their door. Then he returned to his room, and walked about for a long time, but with a more quiet step. At last, I heard him throw himself on his bed, and I came down about

break of day. After that, all remained tranquil."

"But whatever can be the matter with him, father?"

"I do not know. When I went up to him, I was astonished at the agitation of his countenance and the brilliancy of his eyes. He would have looked much the same had he been delirious, or in a burning fever—so that, when I heard him say he could have thrown himself out of the window, had it been open, I thought it more prudent to remove the caps from his pistols."

"I cannot understand it!" said Agricola. "So firm, intrepid, and cool a man as the marshal a prey to such violence!"

"I tell you that something very extraordinary is passing within him. For two days he has not been to see his children, which is always a bad sign with him—to say nothing of the poor little angels themselves, who are miserable at the notion that they have displeased their father. They displease him! If only you knew the life they lead, dear creatures! a walk or ride with me and their companion, for I never let them go out alone, and, the rest of their time, at their studies, reading, or needlework—always together—and then

to bed. Yet their duenna, who is, I think, a worthy woman, tells me that sometimes at night she has seen them shed tears in their sleep. Poor children! they have hitherto known but little happiness," added the soldier, with a sigh.

At this moment, hearing some one walk hastily across the courtyard, Dagobert raised his eyes, and saw Marshal Simon, with pale face and bewildered air, holding in his two hands a letter, which he seemed to read with devouring anxiety.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE GOLDEN CITY.

WHILE Marshal Simon was crossing the little court with so agitated an air, reading the anonymous letter, which he had received by Spoilsport's unexpected medium, Rose and Blanche were alone together, in the sitting-room they usually occupied, which had been entered for a moment by Loony during their absence. The poor children seemed destined to a succession of sorrows. At the moment their mourning for their mother drew near its close the tragical death of their grandfather had again dressed them in funereal weeds. They were seated together upon a couch,

in front of their work-table. Grief often produces the effect of years. Hence, in a few months, Rose and Blanche had become quite young women. To the infantine grace of their charming faces, formerly so plump and rosy, but now pale and thin, had succeeded an expression of grave and touching sadness. Their large, mild eyes of limpid azure, which always had a dreamy character, were now never bathed in those joyous tears, with which a burst of frank and hearty laughter used of old to adorn their silky lashes, when the comic coolness of Dagobert, or some funny trick of Spoilsport, cheered them in the course of their long and weary pilgrimage.

In a word, those delightful faces, which the flowery pencil of Greuze could alone have painted in all their velvet freshness, were now worthy of inspiring the melancholy ideal of the immortal Ary Scheffer, who gave us Mignon aspiring to Paradise, and Margaret dreaming of Faust. Rose, leaning back on the couch, held her head somewhat bowed upon her bosom, over which was crossed a handkerchief of black crape. The light, streaming from a window opposite, shone softly on her pure, white forehead, crowned by two thick bands of chestnut hair. Her look was

fixed, and the open arch of her eyebrows, now somewhat contracted, announced a mind occupied with painful thoughts. Her thin, white little hands had fallen upon her knees, but still held the embroidery on which she had been engaged. The profile of Blanche was visible, leaning a little toward her sister, with an expression of tender and anxious solicitude, while her needle remained in the canvas, as if she had just ceased to work.

"Sister," said Blanche, in a low voice, after some moments of silence, during which the tears seemed to mount to her eyes, "tell me what you are thinking of. You look so sad."

"I think of the Golden City of our dreams," replied Rose, almost in a whisper, after another short silence.

Blanche understood the bitterness of these words. Without speaking, she threw herself on her sister's neck and wept. Poor girls! the Golden City of their dreams was Paris, with their father in it—Paris, the marvelous city of joys and festivals, through all of which the orphans had beheld the radiant and smiling countenance of their sire! But, alas! the Beautiful City had been changed into a place of tears, and death, and mourning.

The same terrible pestilence which had struck down their mother in the heart of Siberia seemed to have followed them like a dark and fatal cloud, which, always hovering about them, hid the mild blue of the sky, and the joyous light of the sun.

The Golden City of their dreams! It was the place where perhaps one day their father would present to them two young lovers, good and fair as themselves. "They love you," he was to say; "they are worthy of you. Let each of you have a brother, and me two sons." Then what chaste, enchanting confusion for those two orphans, whose hearts, pure as crystal, had never reflected any image but that of Gabriel, the celestial messenger sent by their mother to protect them!

We can therefore understand the painful emotion of Blanche when she heard her sister repeat, with bitter melancholy, those words which described their whole situation: "I think of the Golden City of our dreams!"

"Who knows?" proceeded Blanche, drying her sister's tears; "perhaps happiness may yet be in store for us."

"Alas! if we are not happy with our father by us—shall we ever be so?"

"Yes, when we rejoin our mother," said Blanche, lifting her eyes to heaven.

"Then, sister, this dream may be a warning—it is so like that we had in Germany."

"The difference being that then the Angel Gabriel came down from heaven to us, and that this time he takes us from earth to our mother."

"And this dream will perhaps come true, like the other, my sister. We dreamed that the Angel Gabriel would protect us, and he came to save us from shipwreck."

"And, this time, we dream that he will lead us to heaven. Why should not that happen also?"

"But to bring that about, sister, our Gabriel, who saved us from the shipwreck, must die also. No, no; that must not happen. Let us pray that it may not happen."

"No, it will not happen—for it is only Gabriel's good angel, who is so like him, that we saw in our dream."

"Sister, dear, how singular is this dream! —Here, as in Germany, we have both dreamed the same—three times the very same!"

"It is true. The Angel Gabriel bent over us, and looked at us with so mild and

sad an air, saying: 'Come, my children! come, my sisters! Your mother waits for you. Poor children, arrived from so far!' added he in his tender voice: 'You have passed over the earth, gentle and innocent as two doves, to repose forever in the maternal nest.' "

"Yes, those were the words of the archangel," said the other orphan, with a pensive air; "we have done no harm to any one, and we have loved those who loved us—why should we fear to die?"

"Therefore, dear sister, we rather smiled than wept, when he took us by the hand, and, spreading wide his beautiful white wings, carried us along with him to the blue depths of the sky."

"'To heaven, where our dear mother waited for us with open arms, her face all bathed in tears."

"Oh, sweet sister! one has not dreams like ours for nothing. And then," added she, looking at Rose, with a sad smile that went to the heart, "our death might perhaps end the sorrow of which we have been the cause."

"Alas! it is not our fault. We love him so much. But we are so timid and sorrowful before him that he may perhaps think we love him not."

So saying, Rose took her handkerchief from her work-basket, to dry her tears; a paper, folded in the form of a letter, fell out.

At this sight the two shuddered, and pressed close to one another, and Rose said to Blanche, in a trembling voice: "Another of these letters!—Oh, I am afraid! It will doubtless be like the last."

"We must pick it up quickly, that it may not be seen," said Blanche, hastily stooping to seize the letter; "the people who take interest in us might otherwise be exposed to great danger."

"But how could this letter come to us?"

"How did the others come to be placed right under our hand, and always in the absence of our duenna?"

"It is true. Why seek to explain the mystery? We should never be able to do so. Let us read the letter. It will perhaps be more favorable to us than the last." And the two sisters read as follows:

"Continue to love your father, dear children, for he is very miserable, and you are the involuntary cause of his distress. You will never know the terrible sacrifices that your presence imposes on him; but, alas!

he is the victim of his paternal duties. His sufferings are more cruel than ever; spare him at least those marks of tenderness, which occasion him so much more pain than pleasure. Each caress is a dagger-stroke, for he sees in you the innocent cause of his misfortunes. Dear children, you must not therefore despair. If you have enough command over yourselves not to torture him by the display of too warm a tenderness, if you can mingle some reserve with your affection, you will greatly alleviate his sorrow. Keep these letters a secret from every one, even from good Dagobert, who loves you so much; otherwise, both he and you, your father, and the unknown friend who is writing to you, will be exposed to the utmost peril, for your enemies are indeed formidable. Courage and hope! May your father's tenderness be once more free from sorrow and regret!—That happy day is perhaps not so far distant. Burn this letter like all the others!"

The above note was written with so much cunning that, even supposing the orphans had communicated it to their father or Dagobert, it would at the worst have been considered a strange, intrusive

proceeding, but almost excusable from the spirit in which it was conceived. Nothing could have been contrived with more perfidious art, if we consider the cruel perplexity in which Marshal Simon was struggling between the fear of again leaving his children and the shame of neglecting what he considered a sacred duty. All the tenderness, all the susceptibility of heart which distinguished the orphans, had been called into play by these diabolical counsels, and the sisters soon perceived that their presence was in fact both sweet and painful to their father; for sometimes he felt himself incapable of leaving them, and sometimes the thought of a neglected duty spread a cloud of sadness over his brow. Hence the poor twins could not fail to value the fatal meaning of the anonymous letters they received. They were persuaded that, from some mysterious motive, which they were unable to penetrate, their presence was often importunate and even painful to their father. Hence the growing sadness of Rose and Blanche—hence the sort of fear and reserve which restrained the expression of their filial tenderness. A most painful situation for the marshal, who, deceived by inexplicable appearances, mistook, in his turn, their manner for indiffer-

ence to him—and so, with breaking heart, and bitter grief upon his face, often abruptly quitted his children to conceal his tears!

And the desponding orphans said to each other: "We are the cause of our father's grief. It is our presence which makes him so unhappy."

The reader may now judge what ravages such a thought, when fixed and incessant, must have made on these young, loving, timid, and simple hearts. How could the orphans be on their guard against such annoymous communications, which spoke with reverence of all they loved, and seemed every day justified by the conduct of their father? Already victims of numerous plots, and hearing that they were surrounded by enemies, we can understand how, faithful to the advice of their unknown friend, they forbore to confide to Dagobert these letters, in which he was so justly appreciated. The object of the proceeding was very plain. By continually harassing the marshal on all sides, and persuading him of the coldness of his children, the conspirators might naturally hope to conquer the hesitation which had hitherto prevented his again quitting his daughters to embark in a dangerous enter-

prise. To render the marshal's life so burdensome that he would desire to seek relief from his torments in any project of daring and generous chivalry, was one of the ends proposed by Rodin—and, as we have seen, it wanted neither logic nor possibility.

. . . . . .

After having read the letter, the two remained for a moment silent and dejected. Then Rose, who held the paper in her hand, started up suddenly, approached the chimney-piece, and threw the letter into the fire, saying, with a timid air: "We must burn it quickly, or perhaps some great danger will ensue."

"What greater misfortune can happen to us," said Blanche, despondingly, "than to cause such sorrow to our father? What can be the reason of it?"

"Perhaps," said Rose, whose tears were slowly trickling down her cheek, "he does not find us what he could have desired. He may love us well as the children of our poor mother, but we are not the daughters he had dreamed of. Do you understand me, sister?"

"Yes, yes—that is perhaps what occasions all his sorrow. We are so badly informed, so wild, so awkward, that he is

no doubt ashamed of us; and, as he loves us in spite of all, it makes him suffer!"

"Alas! it is not our fault. Our dear mother brought us up in the deserts of Siberia as well as she could."

"Oh! father himself does not reproach us with it: only it gives him pain."

"Particularly if he has friends whose daughters are very beautiful and possessed of all sorts of talents. Then he must bitterly regret that we are not the same."

"Dost remember when he took us to see our cousin, Mdlle. Adrienne, who was so affectionate and kind to us, that he said to us, with admiration: 'Did you notice her, my children? How beautiful she is, and what talent, what a noble heart, and therewith such grace and elegance?' "

"Oh, it is very true! Mdlle. de Cardoville is so beautiful, her voice is so sweet and gentle, that, when we saw and heard her, we fancied that all our troubles were at an end."

"And it is because of such beauty, no doubt, that our father, comparing us with our cousin and so many other handsome young ladies, cannot be very proud of us. And he, who is so loved and honored, would have liked to have been proud of his daughters."

Suddenly Rose laid her hand on her sister's arm, and said to her, with anxiety:

"Listen! listen! they are talking very loud in father's bedroom."

"Yes," said Blanche, listening in her turn; "and I can hear him walking. That is his step."

"Good Heaven! how he raises his voice; he seems to be in a great passion; he will perhaps come this way."

And at the thought of their father's coming—that father who really adored them—the unhappy children looked in terror at each other. The sound of a loud and angry voice became more and more distinct; and Rose, trembling through all her frame, said to her sister: "Do not let us remain here! Come into our room."

"Why?"

"We should hear, without designing it, the words of our father—and he does not perhaps know that we are so near."

"You are right. Come, come!" answered Blanche, as she rose hastily from her seat.

"Oh! I am afraid. I have never heard him speak in so angry a tone."

"Oh! kind Heaven!" said Blanche, growing pale, as she stopped involun-

tarily. "It is to Dagobert that he is talking so loud."

"What can be the matter—to make our father speak to him in that way?"

"Alas! some great misfortune must have happened."

"Oh, sister! do not let us remain here! It pains me too much to hear Dagobert thus spoken to."

The crash of some article, hurled with violence and broken to pieces in the next room, so frightened the orphans that, pale and trembling with emotion, they rushed into their own apartment, and fastened the door. We must now explain the cause of Marshal Simon's violent anger.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE STUNG LION.

THIS was the scene, the sound of which had so terrified Rose and Blanche. At first alone in his chamber, in a state of exasperation difficult to describe, Marshal Simon had begun to walk hastily up and down, his handsome, manly face inflamed with rage, his eyes sparkling with indignation, while on his broad forehead, crowned with short-cut hair that was now turning

gray, large veins, of which you might count the pulsations, were swollen almost to bursting; and sometimes his thick, black mustache was curled with a convulsive motion, not unlike that which is seen in the visage of a raging lion. And even as the wounded lion, in its fury, harassed and tortured by a thousand invisible darts, walks up and down its den with savage wrath, so Marshal Simon paced the floor of his room, as if bounding from side to side; sometimes he stooped, as though bending beneath the weight of his anger; sometimes, on the contrary, he paused abruptly, drew himself up to his full height, crossed his arms upon his vigorous chest, and with raised brow, threatening and terrible look, seemed to defy some invisible enemy, and murmur confused exclamations. Then he stood like a man of war and battle in all his intrepid fire.

And now he stamped angrily with his foot, approached the chimney-piece, and pulled the bell so violently that the bell-rope remained in his hand. A servant hastened to attend to this precipitate summons. "Did you not tell Dagobert that I wished to speak to him?" cried the marshal.

"I executed your grace's orders, but M.

Dagobert was accompanying his son to the door, and—"

"Very well!" interrupted Marshal Simon, with an abrupt and imperious gesture.

The servant went out, and his master continued to walk up and down with impatient steps, crumpling, in his rage, a letter that he held in his left hand. This letter had been innocently delivered by Spoilsport, who, seeing him come in, had run joyously to meet him. At length the door opened, and Dagobert appeared. "I have been waiting for you a long time, sirrah?" cried the marshal, in an irritated tone.

Dagobert, more pained than surprised at this burst of anger, which he rightly attributed to the constant state of excitement in which the marshal had now been for some time past, answered mildly: "I beg your pardon, general, but I was letting out my son—"

"Read that, sir!" said the marshal abruptly, giving him the letter.

While Dagobert was reading it, the marshal resumed, with growing anger, as he kicked over a chair that stood in his way: "Thus, even in my own house, there are wretches bribed to harass me with incredi-

ble perseverance. Well! have you read it, sir?"

"It is a fresh insult to add to the others," said Dagobert, coolly, as he threw the letter into the fire.

"The letter is infamous—but it speaks the truth," replied the marshal. Dagobert looked at him in amazement.

"And can you tell who brought me this infamous letter?" continued the marshal. "One would think the devil had a hand in it—for it was your dog!"

"Spoilsport?" said Dagobert, in the utmost surprise.

"Yes," answered the marshal, bitterly; "it is no doubt a joke of your invention."

"I have no heart for joking, general," answered Dagobert, more and more saddened by the irritable state of the marshal; "I cannot explain how it happened. Spoilsport is a good carrier, and no doubt found the letter in the house—"

"And who can have left it there? Am I surrounded by traitors? Do you keep no watch? You, in whom I have every confidence?"

"Listen to me, general—"

But the marshal proceeded, without waiting to hear him: "What! I have made

war for five and-twenty years, I have battled with armies, I have struggled victoriously through the evil times of exile and proscription, I have withstood blows from maces of iron—and now I am to be killed with pins! Pursued into my own house, harassed with impunity, worn out, tortured every minute, to gratify some unknown, miserable hate! When I say unknown, I am wrong—it is D'Aigrigny, the renegade, who is at the bottom of all this, I am sure. I have in the world but one enemy, and he is the man. I must finish with him, for I am weary of this—it is too much!"

"But, general, remember he is a priest—"

"What do I care for that? Have I not seen him handle the sword? I will yet make a soldier's blood rise to the forehead of the traitor!"

"But, general—"

"I tell you that I must be avenged on some one," cried the marshal, with an accent of the most violent exasperation; "I tell you, that I must find a living representative of these cowardly plots, that I may at once make an end of him! They press upon me from all sides; they make my life a hell—you know it—and you do nothing to save me from these tortures,

which are killing me as by a slow fire. Can I have no one in whom to trust?"

"General, I can't let you say that," replied Dagobert, in a calm, but firm voice.

"And why not?"

"General, I can't let you say that you have no one to trust to. You might end perhaps in believing it, and then it would be even worse for yourself than for those who well know their devotion for you, and would go through fire and water to serve you. I am one of them—and you know it."

These simple words, pronounced by Dagobert with a tone of deep conviction, recalled the marshal to himself; for although his honorable and generous character might from time to time be imbittered by irritation and grief, he soon recovered his natural equanimity. So, addressing Dagobert in a less abrupt tone, he said to him, though still much agitated: "You are right. I could never doubt your fidelity. But anger deprives me of my senses. This infamous letter is enough to drive one mad. I am unjustly ungrateful—yes, ungrateful—and to you!"

"Do not think of me, general. With a kind word at the end, you might blow me

up all the year round. But what has happened?"

The general's countenance again darkened, as he answered rapidly: "I am looked down upon, and despised!"

"You?"

"Yes, I. After all," resumed the marshal, bitterly, "why should I conceal from you this new wound? If I doubted you a moment, I owe you some compensation, and you shall know all. For some time past, I have perceived that, when I meet any of my old companions in arms, they try to avoid me—"

"What! was it to this that the anonymous letter alluded?"

"Yes; and it spoke the truth," replied the marshal, with a sigh of grief and indignation.

"But it is impossible, general—you are so loved and respected—"

"Those are mere words; I speak of positive facts. When I appear, the conversation is often interrupted. Instead of treating me as an old comrade, they affect toward me a rigorously cold politeness. There are a thousand little shades, a thousand trifles, which wound the heart, but which it is impossible to notice—"

"What you are now saying, general,

quite confounds me," replied Dagobert. "You assure me of it, and I am forced to believe you."

"Oh, it is intolerable! I was resolved to ease my heart of it; so, this morning, I went to General d'Havrincourt, who was colonel with me in the Imperial Guard; he is honor and honesty itself. I went to him with open heart. 'I perceive,' said I, 'the coldness that is shown me. Some calumny must be circulating to my disadvantage. Tell me all about it. Knowing the attack, I shall be able to defend myself."

"Well, general?"

"D'Havrincourt remained impassible, ceremoniously polite. To all my questions he answered coldly: 'I am not aware, my lord duke, that any calumny has been circulated with regard to you.' —'Do not call me "my lord duke," my dear D'Havrincourt; we are old fellow-soldiers and friends; my honor is somewhat touchy, I confess, and I find that you and our comrades do not receive me so cordially as in times past. You do not deny it; I see, I know, I feel it.' To all this D'Havrincourt answered, with the same coldness: 'I have never seen any one wanting in respect toward you.'—'I am not talking of respect,' exclaimed I, as

I clasped his hand affectionately, though I observed that he but feebly returned the pressure; 'I speak of cordiality, confidence, which I once enjoyed, while now, I am treated like a stranger. Why is it? What has occasioned this change?' Still cold and reserved, he answered: 'These distinctions are so nice, marshal, that it is impossible for me to give you any opinion on the subject.' My heart swelled with grief and anger. What was I to do? To quarrel with D'Havrincourt would have been absurd. A sense of dignity forced me to break off the interview, but it has only confirmed my fears. Thus," added the marshal, getting more and more animated, "thus am I fallen from the esteem to which I am entitled, thus am I despised, without even knowing the cause! Is it not odious! If they would only utter a charge against me—I should at least be able to defend myself, and to find an answer. But, no, no! not even a word—only the cold politeness that is worse than any insult. Oh! it is too much, too much! for all this comes but in addition to other cares. What a life is mine, since the death of my father! If I did but find rest and happiness at home —but no! I come in, but to read shameful letters; and still worse," added the mar-

shal, in a heartrending tone, and after a moment's hesitation, "to find my children grow more and more indifferent toward me. Yes," continued he, perceiving the amazement of Dagobert, "and yet they know how much I love them!"

"Your daughters indifferent!" exclaimed Dagobert, in astonishment. "You make them such a reproach?"

"Oh! I do not blame them. They have hardly had time to know me."

"Not had time to know you?" returned the soldier, in a tone of remonstrance, and warming up in his turn. "Ah! of what did their mother talk to them, except you? and I too! what could I teach your children except to know and love you?"

"You take their part—that is natural—they love you better than they do me," said the marshal, with growing bitterness. Dagobert felt himself so painfully affected that he looked at the marshal without answering.

"Yes," continued the other; "yes! it may be base and ungrateful—but no matter! Twenty times I have felt jealous of the affectionate confidence which my children display toward you, while with me they seem always to be in fear. If their melancholy faces ever grow animated for

a moment, it is in talking to you, in seeing you; while for me they have nothing but cold respect—and that kills me. Sure of the affection of my children, I would have braved and surmounted every difficulty." Then, seeing that Dagobert rushed toward the door which led to the chamber of Rose and Blanche, the marshal added: "Where are you going?"

"For your daughters, general."

"What for?"

"To bring them face to face with you—to tell them: 'My children, your father thinks that you do not love him.'—I will only say that—and then you will see."

"Dagobert! I forbid you to do it," cried the marshal, hastily.

"I don't care for that—you have no right to be unjust to the poor children," said the soldier, as he again advanced toward the door.

"Dagobert, I command you to remain here," cried the marshal.

"Listen to me, general. I am your soldier, your inferior, your servant, if you will," said the old grenadier, roughly: "but neither rank nor station shall keep me silent, when I have to defend your daughters. All must be explained — I

know but one way—and that is to bring honest people face to face."

If the marshal had not seized him by the arm, Dagobert would have entered the apartment of the young girls.

"Remain!" said the marshal, so imperiously, that the soldier, accustomed to obedience, hung his head, and stood still.

"What would you do?" resumed the marshal. "Tell my children that I think they do not love me? induce them to affecs a tenderness they do not feel—when it it not their fault, but mine?"

"Oh, general!" said Dagobert, in a tone of despair, "I no longer feel anger, in hearing you speak thus of your children. It is such grief, that it breaks my heart!"

Touched by the expression of the soldier's countenance, the marshal continued, less abruptly: "Come, I may be wrong; and yet I ask you, without bitterness or jealousy, are not my children more confiding, more familiar, with you than with me!"

"God bless me, general!" cried Dagobert; "if you come to that, they are more familiar with Spoilsport than with either of us. You are their father; and however kind a father may be he must always command some respect. Familiar with me!

I should think so. A fine story! What the devil should they respect in me who, except that I am six feet high and wear a mustache, might pass for the old woman that nursed them! and then I must say that even before the death of your worthy father you were sad and full of thought; the children have remarked that, and what you take for coldness on their part, is, I am sure, anxiety for you. Come, general; you are not just. You complain, because they love you too much."

"I complain, because I suffer," said the marshal, in an agony of excitement. "I alone know my sufferings."

"They must indeed be grievous, general," said Dagobert, carried further than he would otherwise have gone by his attachment for the orphans, "since those who love you feel them so cruelly."

"What, sir! more reproaches?"

"Yes, general, reproaches," cried Dagobert. "Your children have the right to complain of you, since you accuse them so unjustly."

"Sir," said the marshal, scarcely able to contain himself, "this is enough—this is too much!"

"Oh, yes! it is enough," replied Dagobert, with rising emotion. "Why defend

unfortunate children, who can only love and submit? Why defend them against your unhappy blindness?"

The marshal started with anger and impatience, but then replied, with a forced calmness: "I needs must remember all that I owe you—and I will not forget it, say what you will."

"But, general," cried Dagobert, "why will you not let me fetch your children?"

"Do you not see that this scene is killing me?" cried the exasperated marshal. "Do you not understand that I will not have my children witness what I suffer? A father's grief has its dignity, sir; and you ought to feel for and respect it."

"Respect it? no—not when it is founded on injustice!"

"Enough, sir—enough!"

"And not content with tormenting yourself," cried Dagobert, unable any longer to control his feelings, "do you know what you will do? You will make your children die of sorrow. Was it for this that I brought them to you from the depths of Siberia?"

"More reproaches!"

"Yes; for the worst ingratitude toward me is to make your children unhappy."

"Leave the room, sir!" cried the mar-

shal, quite beside himself, and so terrible with rage and grief that Dagobert, regretting that he had gone so far, resumed: "I was wrong, general. I have perhaps been wanting in respect to you—forgive me—but—"

"I forgive you—only leave me!" said the marshal, hardly restraining himself.

"One word, general—"

"I entreat you to leave me—I ask it as a service—is that enough?" said the marshal, with renewed efforts to control the violence of his emotions.

A deadly paleness succeeded to the high color which during this painful scene had inflamed the cheeks of the marshal. Alarmed at this symptom, Dagobert redoubled his entreaties. "I implore you, general," said he, in an agitated voice, "to permit me for one moment—"

"Since you will have it so, sir, I must be the one to leave," said the marshal, making a step toward the door.

These words were said in such a manner that Dagobert could no longer resist. He hung his head in despair, looked for a moment in silent supplication at the marshal, and then, as the latter seemed yielding to a new movement of rage, the soldier slowly quitted the room.

. . . . . .

A few minutes had scarcely elapsed since the departure of Dagobert, when the marshal, who, after a long and gloomy silence, had repeatedly drawn near the door of his daughters' apartment with a mixture of hesitation and anguish, suddenly made a violent effort, wiped the cold sweat from his brow and entered the chamber in which Rose and Blanche had taken refuge.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TEST.

DAGOBERT was right in defending his children, as he paternally called Rose and Blanche, and yet the apprehensions of the marshal with regard to the coldness of his daughters were unfortunately justified by appearances. As he had told his father, unable to explain the sad and almost trembling embarrassment which his daughters felt in his presence, he sought in vain for the cause of what he termed their indifference. Now reproaching himself bitterly for not concealing from them his grief at the death of their mother, he feared he might have given them to understand that they would be unable to console him; now supposing that he had not shown himself sufficiently tender, and that he had chilled

them with his military sternness; and now repeating with bitter regret, that, having always lived away from them, he must be always a stranger to them. In a word, the most unlikely suppositions presented themselves by turns to his mind, and whenever such seeds of doubt, suspicion, or fear, are blended with a warm affection, they will sooner or later develop themselves with fatal effect. Yet, notwithstanding this fancied coldness, from which he suffered so much, the affection of the marshal for his daughters was so true and deep, that the thought of again quitting them caused the hesitations which were the torment of his life, and provoked an incessant struggle between his paternal love and the duty he held most sacred.

The injurious calumnies, which had been so skillfully propagated that men of honor, like his old brothers in arms, were found to attach some credit to them, had been spread with frightful pertinacity by the friends of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. We shall describe hereafter the meaning and object of these odious reports, which, joined with so many other fatal injuries, had filled up the measure of the marshal's indignation. Inflamed with anger, excited almost to madness by this incessant "stab-

bing with pins" (as he had himself called it), and offended at some of Dagobert's words, he had spoken harshly to him. But, after the soldier's departure, when left to reflect in silence, the marshal remembered the warm and earnest expressions of the defender of his children, and a doubt crossed his mind as to the reality of the coldness of which he accused them. Therefore, having taken a terrible resolution, in case a new trial should confirm his desponding doubts, he entered, as we before said, his daughters' chamber. The discussion with Dagobert had been so loud that the sound of the voices had confusedly reached the ears of the two sisters, even after they had taken refuge in their bedroom. So that, on the arrival of their father, their pale faces betrayed their fear and anxiety. At sight of the marshal, whose countenance was also much agitated, the girls rose respectfully, but remained close together, trembling in each other's arms. And yet there was neither anger nor severity on their father's face—only a deep, almost supplicating grief, which seemed to say: "My children, I suffer—I have come to you—console me, love me! or I shall die!"

The marshal's countenance was at this

time so expressive, that, the first impulse of fear once surmounted, the sisters were about to thrown themselves into his arms; but remembering the recommendations of the anonymous letter, which told them how painful any effusion of their tenderness was to their father, they exchanged a rapid glance, and remained motionless. By a cruel fatality, the marshal at this moment burned to open his arms to his children. He looked at them with love, he even made a slight movement as if to call them to him; but he would not attempt more, for fear of meeting with no response. Still the poor children, paralyzed by perfidious counsels, remained mute, motionless, trembling!

"It is all over," thought he, as he gazed upon them. "No chord of sympathy stirs in their bosom. Whether I go—whether I remain—matters not to them. No, I am nothing to these children—since, at this awful moment, when they see me perhaps for the last time, no filial instinct tells them that their affection might save me still!"

During these terrible reflections, the marshal had not taken his eyes off his children, and his manly countenance assumed an expression at once so touching and mournful—his look revealed so pain-

fully the tortures of his despairing soul—that Rose and Blanche, confused, alarmed, but yielding together to a spontaneous movement, threw themselves on their father's neck, and covered him with tears and caresses. Marshal Simon had not spoken a word; his daughters had not uttered a sound; and yet all three had at length understood one another. A sympathetic shock had electrified and mingled those three hearts. Vain fears, false doubts, lying counsel, all had yielded to the irresistible emotion which had brought the daughters to their father's arms. A sudden revelation gave them faith, at the fatal moment when incurable suspicion was about to separate them forever.

In a second, the marshal felt all this, but words failed him. Pale, bewildered, kissing the brows, the hair, the hands of his daughters, weeping, sighing, smiling all in turn, he was wild, delirious, drunk with happiness. At length, he exclaimed: "I have found them—or rather, I had never lost them. They loved me, and did not dare to tell me so. I overawed them. And I thought it was my fault. Heavens! what good that does! what strength, what heart, what hope!—Ha! ha!" cried he, laughing and weeping at the same time,

while he covered his children with caresses; "they may despise me now, they may harass me now—I defy them all! My own blue eyes! my sweet blue eyes! look at me well, and inspire me with new life."

"Oh, father! you love us then as much as we love you?" cried Rose, with enchanting simplicity.

"And we may often, very often, perhaps every day, throw ourselves on your neck, embrace you, and prove how glad we are to be with you?"

"Show you, dear father, all the store of love we were heaping up in our hearts—so sad, alas! that we could not spend it upon you?"

"Tell you aloud all that we think in secret?"

"Yes—you may do so—you may do so," said Marshal Simon, faltering with joy; "what prevented you, my children? But no; do not answer; enough of the past!—I know all, I understand all. You misinterpreted my gloom, and it made you sad; I, in my turn, misinterpreted your sadness. But never mind; I scarcely know what I am saying to you. I only think of looking at you—and it dazzles me—it confuses me—it is the dizziness of joy!"

"Oh, look at us, father! look into our

eyes, into our hearts," cried Rose, with rapture.

"And you will read there, happiness for us, and love for you, sir!" added Blanche.

"Sir, sir?" said the marshal, in a tone of affectionate reproach; "what does that mean? Will you call me *father*, if you please?"

"Dear father, your hand!" said Blanche, as she took it and placed it on her heart.

"Dear father, your hand!" said Rose, as she took the other hand of the marshal. "Do you believe now in our love and happiness?" she continued.

It is impossible to describe the charming expression of filial pride in the divine faces of the girls, as their father, slightly pressing their virgin bosoms, seemed to count with delight the joyous pulsations of their hearts.

"Oh, yes! happiness and affection can alone make the heart beat thus!" cried the marshal.

A hoarse sob, heard in the direction of the open door, made the three turn round, and there they saw the tall figure of Dagobert, with the black nose of Spoilsport reaching to his master's knee. The soldier, drying his eyes and mustache with his little blue cotton handkerchief, remained

motionless as the god Terminus. When he could speak, he addressed himself to the marshal, and, shaking his head, muttered, in a hoarse voice, for the good man was swallowing his tears: "Did I not tell you so?"

"Silence!" said the marshal, with a sign of intelligence. "You were a better father than myself, my old friend. Come and kiss them! I shall not be jealous."

The marshal stretched out his hand to the soldier, who pressed it cordially, while the two sisters threw themselves on his neck, and Spoilsport, according to custom, wishing to have his share in the general joy, raised himself on his hind legs, and rested his forepaws against his master's back. There was a moment of profound silence. The celestial felicity enjoyed during that moment, by the marshal, his daughters, and the soldier, was interrupted by the barking of Spoilsport, who suddenly quitted the attitude of a biped. The happy group separated, looked round, and saw Loony's stupid face. He looked even duller than usual, as he stood quite still in the doorway, staring with wide-stretched eyes, and holding a feather-broom under his arm, and in his hand the ever-present basket of wood.

Nothing makes one so gay as happiness; and, though this grotesque figure appeared at a very unseasonable moment, it was received with frank laughter from the blooming lips of Rose and Blanche. Having made the marshal's daughters laugh, after their long sadness, Loony at once acquired a claim to the indulgence of the marshal, who said to him, good-humoredly: "What do you want, my lad?"

"It's not me, my lord duke!" answered Loony, laying his hand on his breast, as if he were taking a vow, so that his feather-brush fell down from under his arm. The laughter of the girls redoubled.

"It is not you?" said the marshal.

"Here! Spoilsport!" Dagobert called, for the honest dog seemed to have a secret dislike for the pretended idiot, and approached him with an angry air.

"No, my lord duke, it is not me!" resumed Loony. "It is the footman who told me to tell M. Dagobert, when I brought up the wood, to tell my lord duke, as I was coming up with the basket, that M. Robert wants to see him."

The girls laughed still more at this new stupidity. But, at the name of Robert, Marshal Simon started.

M. Robert was the secret emissary of

Rodin, with regard to the possible, but adventurous, enterprise of attempting the liberation of Napoleon II.

After a moment's silence, the marshal, whose face was still radiant with joy and happiness, said to Loony: "Beg M. Robert to wait for me a moment in my study."

"Yes, my lord duke," answered Loony, bowing almost to the ground.

The simpleton withdrew, and the marshal said to his daughters, in a joyous tone, "You see, that, in a moment like this, one does not leave one's children, even for M. Robert."

"Oh! that's right, father!" cried Blanche, gayly; "for I was already very angry with this M. Robert."

"Have you pen and paper at hand?" asked the marshal.

"Yes, father; there on the table," said Rose, hastily, as she pointed to a little desk near one of the windows, toward which the marshal now advanced rapidly.

From motives of delicacy, the girls remained where they were, close to the fireplace, and caressed each other tenderly, as if to congratulate themselves in private on the unexpected happiness of this day.

The marshal seated himself at the desk, and made a sign to Dagobert to draw near

MADAME DE SAINTE COLOMBE.

—The Wandering Jew Vol. 5, p. 288.

While he wrote rapidly a few words in a firm hand, he said to the soldier with a smile, in so low a tone that it was impossible for his daughters to hear: "Do you know what I had almost resolved upon before entering this room?"

"What, general?"

"To blow my brains out. It is to my children that I owe my life." And the marshal continued writing.

Dagobert started at this communication, and then replied, also in a whisper: "It would not have been with your pistols. I took off the caps."

The marshal turned round hastily, and looked at him with an air of surprise. But the soldier only nodded his head affirmatively, and added: "Thank Heaven; we have now done with all those ideas!"

The marshal's only answer was to glance at his children, his eyes swimming with tenderness, and sparkling with delight; then, sealing the note he had written, he gave it to the soldier, and said to him, "Give that to M. Robert. I will see him to-morrow."

Dagobert took the letter, and went out. Returning toward his daughters, the marshal joyfully extended his arms to them, and said, "Now, young ladies, two nice

kisses for having sacrificed M. Robert to you. Have I not earned them?" And Rose and Blanche threw themselves on their father's neck.

. . . . . .

About the time that these events were taking place at Paris, two travelers, wide apart from each other, exchanged mysterious thoughts through the breadth of space.

CHAPTER L.

THE RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

THE sun is fast sinking. In the depths of an immense piny wood, in the midst of profound solitude, rise the ruins of an abbey, once sacred to St. John the Baptist. Ivy, moss, and creeping plants almost entirely conceal the stones, now black with age. Some broken arches, some walls pierced with ovals, still remain standing, visible on the dark background of the thick wood. Looking down upon this mass of ruins, from a broken pedestal, half-covered with ivy, a mutilated, but colossal statue of stone still keeps its place. This statue is strange and awful. It represents a headless human figure. Clad in the antique toga, it holds in its hand a dish, and

on that dish is a head. This head is its own. It is the statue of St. John the Baptist and Martyr, put to death by wish of Herodias.

The silence around is solemn. From time to time, however, is heard the dull rustling of the enormous branches of the pine-trees, shaken by the wind. Copper-colored clouds, reddened by the setting sun, pass slowly over the forest, and are reflected in the current of a brook, which, deriving its source from a neighboring mass of rocks, flows through the ruins. The water flows, the clouds pass on, the ancient trees tremble, the breeze murmurs.

Suddenly, through the shadow, thrown by the overhanging wood, which stretches far into endless depths, a human form appears. It is a woman. She advances slowly toward the ruins. She has reached them. She treads the once sacred ground. This woman is pale, her look sad, her long robe floats on the wind, her feet are covered with dust. She walks with difficulty and pain. A block of stone is placed near the stream, almost at the foot of the statue of St. John the Baptist. Upon this stone she sinks breathless and exhausted, worn out with fatigue. And yet, for many

days, many years, many centuries, she has walked on unwearied.

For the first time, she feels an unconquerable sense of lassitude. For the first time, her feet begin to fail her. For the first time, she, who traversed, with firm and equal footsteps, the moving lava of torrid deserts, while whole caravans were buried in drifts of fiery sand—who passed, with steady and disdainful tread, over the eternal snows of Arctic regions, over icy solitudes, in which no other human being could live—who had been spared by the devouring flames of conflagrations, and by the impetuous waters of torrents—she, in brief, who for centuries had had nothing in common with humanity—for the first time suffers mortal pain.

Her feet bleed, her limbs ache with fatigue, she is devoured by burning thirst. She feels these infirmities, yet scarcely dares to believe them real. Her joy would be too immense! But now, her throat becomes dry, contracted, all on fire. She sees the stream, and throws herself on her knees, to quench her thirst in that crystal current, transparent as a mirror. What happens then? Hardly have her fevered lips touched the fresh, pure water, than, still kneeling, supported on her hands, she

suddenly ceases to drink, and gazes eagerly on the limpid stream. Forgetting the thirst which devours her, she utters a loud cry—a cry of deep, earnest, religious joy, like a note of praise and infinite gratitude to Heaven. In that deep mirror, she perceives that she has grown older.

In a few days, a few hours, a few minutes, perhaps in a single second, she has attained the maturity of age. She, who for more than eighteen centuries has been as a woman of twenty, carrying through successive generations the load of her imperishable youth—she has grown old, and may, perhaps, at length, hope to die. Every minute of her life may now bring her nearer to the last home! Transported by that ineffable hope, she rises and lifts her eyes to heaven, clasping her hands in an attitude of fervent prayer. Then her eyes rest on the tall statue of stone, representing St. John. The head, which the martyr carries in his hand, seems, from beneath its half-closed granite eyelid, to cast upon the Wandering Jewess a glance of commiseration and pity. And it was she, Herodias, who, in the cruel intoxication of a pagan festival, demanded the murder of the saint! And it is at the foot of the martyr's image that, for the first

time, the immortality, which weighed on her for so many centuries, seems likely to find a term!

"Oh, impenetrable mystery! oh, divine hope!" she cries. "The wrath of Heaven is at length appeased. The hand of the Lord brings me to the feet of the blessed martyr, and I begin once more to feel myself a human creature. And yet it was to avenge his death that the same Heaven condemned me to eternal wanderings!

"Oh, Lord! grant that I may not be the only one forgiven. May he—the artisan, who, like me, daughter of a king, wanders on for centuries—likewise hope to reach the end of that immense journey!

"Where is he, Lord? where is he? Hast thou deprived me of the power once bestowed, to see and hear him through the vastness of intervening space? Oh! in this mighty moment, restore me that divine gift—for the more I feel these human infirmities, which I hail and bless as the end of my eternity of ills, the more my sight loses the power to traverse immensity, and my ear to catch the sound of that wanderer's accents, from the other extremity of the globe!"

Night had fallen, dark and stormy. The wind rose in the midst of the great pine-

trees. Behind their black summits, through masses of dark cloud, slowly sailed the silver disk of the moon. The invocation of the Wandering Jewess had perhaps been heard. Suddenly, her eyes closed; with hands clasped together, she remained kneeling in the heart of the ruins —motionless as a statue upon a tomb. And then she had a wondrous dream!

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CHAPTER LI.

THE CALVARY

THIS was the vision of Herodias: On the summit of a high, steep, rocky mountain, there stands a cross. The sun is sinking, even as when the Jewess herself, worn out with fatigue, entered the ruins of St. John's Abbey. The great figure on the cross--which looks down from this Calvary, on the mountain, and on the vast, dreary plain beyond—stands out white and pale against the dark, blue clouds which stretch across the heavens, and assume a violet tint toward the horizon. There, where the setting sun has left a long track of lurid light, almost of the hue of blood—as far as the eye can reach, no vegetation appears on the surface of the gloomy desert, covered with sand and stones, like the

ancient bed of some dried-up ocean. A silence as of death broods over this desolate tract. Sometimes, gigantic black vultures, with red, unfeathered necks, luminous yellow eyes, stooping from their lofty flight in the midst of these solitudes, come to make their bloody feast on the prey they have carried off from less uncultivated regions.

How, then, did this Calvary, this place of prayer, come to be erected so far from the abodes of men? This Calvary was prepared at a great cost by a repentant sinner. He had done much harm to his fellow-creatures, and, in the hope of obtaining pardon for his crimes, he had climbed this mountain on his knees, and become a hermit, and lived there till his death, at the foot of this cross, only sheltered by a roof of thatch, now long since swept away by the wind. The sun is still sinking. The sky becomes darker. The luminous lines on the horizon grow fainter and fainter, like heated bars of iron that gradually grow cool. Suddenly, on the eastern side of the Calvary, is heard the noise of some falling stones, which, loosened from the side of the mountain, roll down rebounding to its base. These stones have been loosened by the foot of a traveler, who,

after traversing the plain below, has during the last hour been climbing the steep ascent. He is not yet visible—but one hears the echo of his tread—slow, steady, and firm. At length, he reaches the top of the mountain, and his tall figure stands out against the stormy sky.

The traveler is pale as the great figure on the cross. On his broad forehead a black line extends from one temple to the other. It is the cobbler of Jerusalem. The poor artisan, who, hardened by misery, injustice, and oppression, without pity for the suffering of the Divine Being who bore the cross, repulsed Him from his dwelling, and bade Him "GO ON! GO ON! GO ON!" And, from that day, the avenging Deity has in His turn said to the artisan of Jerusalem: "GO ON! GO ON! GO ON!"

And he has gone on, without end or rest. Nor did the Divine vengeance stop there. From time to time death has followed the steps of the wanderer, and innumerable graves have been even as mile-stones on his fatal path. And if ever he found periods of repose in the midst of his infinite grief, it was when the hand of the Lord led him into deep solitudes, like that where he now dragged his steps along. In passing

over that dreary plain, or climbing to that rude Calvary, he at least heard no more the funeral knell, which always, always sounded behind him in every inhabited region.

All day long, even at this hour, plunged in the black abyss of his thoughts, following the fatal track—going whither he was guided by the invisible hand, with head bowed on his breast, and eyes fixed upon the ground, the wanderer had passed over the plain and ascended the mountain, without once looking at the sky—without even perceiving the Calvary—without seeing the image upon the cross. He thought of the last descendants of his race. He felt, by the sinking of his heart, that great perils continued to threaten them. And in the bitterness of a despair wild and deep as the ocean, the cobbler of Jerusalem seated himself at the foot of the cross. At this moment a farewell ray of the setting sun, piercing the dark mass of clouds, threw a reflection upon the Calvary, vivid as a conflagration's glare. The Jew rested his forehead upon his hand. His long hair, shaken by the evening breeze, fell over his pale face—when, sweeping it back from his brow, he started with surprise—he, who had long ceased to wonder at anything.

With eager glance he contemplated the long lock of hair that he held between his fingers. That hair, until now black as night, had become gray. He also, like unto Herodias, was growing older.

His progress toward old age, stopped for eighteen hundred years, had resumed its course. Like the Wandering Jewess, he might henceforth hope for the rest of the grave. Throwing himself on his knees, he stretched his hands toward heaven, to ask for the explanation of the mystery which filled him with hope. Then, for the first time, his eyes rested on the Crucified One, looking down upon the Calvary, even as the Wandering Jewess had fixed her gaze on the granite eyelids of the Blessed Martyr.

The Saviour, His head bowed under the weight of His crown of thorns, seemed from the cross to view with pity and pardon the artisan, who for so many centuries had felt His curse—and who, kneeling, with his body thrown backward in an attitude of fear and supplication, now lifted toward the crucifix his imploring hands.

"Oh, Messiah!" cried the Jew, "the avenging arm of Heaven brings me back to the foot of this heavy cross, which Thou didst bear, when, stopping at the door of

my poor dwelling, Thou wert repulsed with merciless harshness, and I said unto Thee: 'Go on! go on!'—After my long life of wanderings, I am again before this cross, and my hair begins to whiten. Oh, Lord! in Thy divine mercy, hast Thou at length pardoned me? Have I reached the term of my endless march? Will Thy celestial clemency grant me at length the repose of the sepulcher, which, until now, alas! has ever fled before me?—Oh, if Thy mercy should descend upon me, let it fall likewise upon that woman whose woes are equal to mine own! Protect also the last descendants of my race! What will be their fate? Already, Lord, one of them—the only one that misfortune had perverted—has perished from the face of the earth. Is it for this that my hair grows gray? Will my crime only be expiated when there no longer remains in this world one member of our accursed race? Or does this proof of Thy powerful goodness, Lord, which restores me to the condition of humanity, serve also as a sign of the pardon and happiness of my family? Will they at length triumph over the perils which beset them? Will they, accomplishing the good which their ancestor designed for his fellow-creatures, merit forgiveness both for

themselves and me? Or will they, inexorably condemned as the accursed scions of an accursed stock, expiate the original stain of my detested crime?

"Oh, tell me—tell me, gracious Lord! shall I be forgiven with them, or will they be punished with me?"

. . . . . .

The twilight gave place to a dark and stormy night, yet the Jew continued to pray, kneeling at the foot of the cross.

CHAPTER LII.

THE COUNCIL.

THE following scene took place at Saint-Dizier House, two days after the reconciliation of Marshal Simon with his daughters. The princess is listening with the most profound attention to the words of Rodin. The reverend father, according to his habit, stands leaning against the mantel-piece, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his old brown greatcoat. His thick, dirty shoes have left their mark on the ermine hearth-rug. A deep sense of satisfaction is impressed on the Jesuit's cadaverous countenance; the Princess de Saint-Dizier, dressed with that sort of modest elegance which becomes a mother

of the Church, keeps her eyes fixed on Rodin—for the latter has completely supplanted Father d'Aigrigny in the good graces of that pious lady. The coolness, audacity, lofty intelligence, and rough and imperious character of the ex-*socius* have overawed this proud woman, and inspired her with a sincere admiration. Even his filthy habits and often brutal repartees have their charm for her, and she now prefers them to the exquisite politeness and perfumed elegance of the accomplished Father d'Aigrigny.

"Yes, madame," said Rodin, in a sanctified tone, for these people do not take off their masks even with their accomplices, "yes, madame, we have excellent news from our house at St. Herem. M. Hardy, the infidel, the freethinker, has at length entered the pale of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church." Rodin pronounced these last words with a nasal twang, and the devout lady bowed her head respectfully.

"Grace has at length touched the heart of this impious man," continued Rodin, "and so effectually that, in his ascetic enthusiasm, he has already wished to take the vows which will bind him forever to our divine Order."

"So soon, father?" said the princess, in astonishment.

"Our statutes are opposed to this precipitation, unless in the case of a penitent *in articulo mortis* — on the very gasp of death—should such a person consider it necessary for his salvation to die in the habit of our Order, and leave us all his wealth for the greater glory of the Lord."

"And is M. Hardy in so dangerous a condition, father?"

"He has a violent fever. After so many successive calamities, which have miraculously brought him into the path of salvation," said Rodin, piously, "his frail and delicate constitution is almost broken up, morally and physically. Austerities, macerations, and the divine joys of ecstasy, will probably hasten his passage to eternal life, and in a few days," said the priest, shaking his head with a solemn air, "perhaps—"

"So soon as that, father?"

"It is almost certain. I have therefore made use of my dispensations to receive the dear penitent, as *in articulo mortis*, a member of our divine Company, to which, in the usual course, he has made over all his possessions, present and to come—so that now he can devote himself

entirely to the care of his soul, which wil be one victim more rescued from the claws of Satan."

"Oh, father!" cried the lady, in admiration; "it is a miraculous conversion. Father d'Aigrigny told me how you had to contend against the influence of the Abbe Gabriel."

"The Abbe Gabriel," replied Rodin, "has been punished for meddling with what did not concern him. I have procured his suspension, and he has been deprived of his curacy. I hear that he now goes about the cholera-hospitals to administer Christian consolation; we cannot oppose that—but this universal comforter is of the true heretical stamp."

"He is a dangerous character, no doubt," answered the princess, "for he has considerable influence over other men. It must have needed all your admirable and irresistible eloquence to combat the detestable counsels of this Abbe Gabriel, who had taken it into his head to persuade M. Hardy to return to the life of the world. Really, father, you are a second St. Chrysostom."

"Tut, tut, madame!" said Rodin, abruptly, for he was very little sensible to flattery; "keep that for others."

"I tell you that you're a second St. Chrysostom, father," repeated the princess, with enthusiasm; "like him, you deserve the name of Golden Mouth."

"Stuff, madame!" said Rodin, brutally, shrugging his shoulders; "my lips are too pale, my teeth too black, for a mouth of gold. You must be only joking."

"But, father—"

"No, madame, you will not catch old birds with chaff," replied Rodin, harshly. "I hate compliments, and I never pay them."

"Your modesty must pardon me, father," said the princess, humbly; "I could not resist the desire to express to you my admiration; for, as you almost predicted, or at least foresaw, two members of the Rennepont family have, within the last few months, resigned all claim to the inheritance."

Rodin looked at Madame de Saint-Dizier with a softened and approving air, as he heard her thus describe the position of the two defunct claimants. For, in Rodin's view of the case, M. Hardy, in consequence of his donation and his suicidal asceticism, belonged no longer to this world.

The lady continued: "One of these men, a wretched artisan, has been led to his

ruin by the exaggeration of his vices. You have brought the other into the path of salvation, by carrying out his loving and tender qualities. Honor, then, to your foresight, father! for you said that you would make use of the passions to attain your end."

"Do not boast too soon," said Rodin, impatiently. "Have you forgotten your niece, and the Hindoo, and the daughters of Marshal Simon? Have they also made a Christian end, or resigned their claim to share in this inheritance?"

"No, doubtless."

"Hence, you see, madame, we should not lose time in congratulating ourselves on the past, but make ready for the future. The great day approaches. The first of June is not far off. Heaven grant we may not see the four surviving members of the family continue to live impenitent up to that period, and so take possession of this enormous property—the source of perdition in their hands—but productive of the glory of the Church in the hands of our Company!"

"True, father!"

"By the way, you were to see your lawyers on the subject of your niece?"

"I have seen them, father. However

uncertain may be the chance of which I spoke, it is worth trying. I shall know to-day, I hope, if it is legally possible."

"Perhaps, then, in the new condition of life to which she would be reduced, we might find means to effect her conversion," said Rodin, with a strange and hideous smile; "until now, since she has been so fatally brought in contact with the Oriental, the happiness of these two pagans appears bright and changeless as the diamond. Nothing bites into it, not even Faringhea's tooth. Let us hope that the Lord will wreak justice on their vain and guilty felicity!" This conversation was here interrupted by Father d'Aigrigny, who entered the room with an air of triumph, and exclaimed, "Victory!"

"What do you say?" asked the princess.

"He is gone—last night," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Who?" said Rodin.

"Marshal Simon," replied the abbe.

"At last!" said Rodin, unable to hide his joy.

"It was no doubt his interview with General d'Havrincourt which filled up the measure," cried the princess, "for I know he had a long conversation with the gen-

eral, who, like so many others, believed the reports in circulation. All means are good against the impious!" added the princess, by way of moral.

"Have you any details?" asked Rodin.

"I have just left Robert," said Father d'Aigrigny. "His age and description agree with the marshal's, and the latter travels with his papers. Only one thing has greatly surprised your emissary."

"What is that?" said Rodin.

"Until now, he had always to contend with the hesitations of the marshal, and had moreover noticed his gloomy and desponding air. Yesterday, on the contrary, he found him so bright with happiness, that he could not help asking him the cause of the alteration."

"Well?" said Rodin and the princess together, both extremely surprised.

"The marshal answered: 'I am indeed the happiest man in the world; for I am going joyfully to accomplish a sacred duty!' "

The three actors in this scene looked at each other in silence.

"And what can have produced this sudden change in the mind of the marshal?" said the princess, with a pensive air. "We rather reckoned on sorrow and every kind

of irritation to urge him to engage in this adventurous enterprise."

"I cannot make it out," said Rodin, reflecting; "but no matter—he is gone. We must not lose a moment, to commence operations on his daughters. Has he taken that infernal soldier with him?"

"No," said Father d'Aigrigny; "unfortunately, he has not done so. Warned by the past, he will redouble his precautions; and a man, whom we might have used against him at a pinch, has just been taken with the contagion."

"Who is that?" asked the princess.

"Morok. I could count upon him, anywhere and for anything. He is lost to us; for, should he recover from the cholera, I fear he will fall a victim to a horrible and incurable disease."

"How so?"

"A few days ago he was bitten by one of the mastiffs of his menagerie, and, the next day, the dog showed symptoms of hydrophobia."

"Ah! it is dreadful," cried the princess; "and where is this unfortunate man?"

"He has been taken to one of the temporary hospitals established in Paris, for at present he has only been attacked with cholera. It is doubly unfortunate, I re-

peat, for he was a devoted, determined fellow, ready for anything. Now this soldier, who has the care of the orphans, will be very difficult to get at, and yet only through him can we hope to reach Marshal Simon's daughters."

"That is clear," said Rodin, thoughtfully.

"Particularly since the anonymous letters have again awakened his suspicions," added Father d'Aigrigny, "and—"

"Talking of the anonymous letters," said Rodin suddenly, interrupting Father d'Aigrigny, "there is a fact that you ought to know; I will tell you why."

"What is it?"

"Besides the letters that you know of, Marshal Simon has received a number of others unknown to you, in which, by every possible means, it is tried to exasperate his irritation against yourself—for they remind him of all the reasons he has to hate you, and mock at him, because your sacred character shelters you from his vengeance."

Father d'Aigrigny looked at Rodin with amazement, colored in spite of himself, and said to him: "But for what purpose has your reverence acted in this manner?"

"First of all, to clear myself of suspicion with regard to the letters; then, to excite

the rage of the marshal to madness, by incessantly reminding him of the just grounds he has to hate you, and of the impossibility of being avenged upon you. This, joined to the other emotions of sorrow and anger, which ferment in the savage bosom of this man of bloodshed, tended to urge him on to the rash enterprise which is the consequence and the punishment of his idolatry for a miserable usurper."

"That may be," said Father d'Aigrigny, with an air of constraint; "but I will observe to your reverence that it was, perhaps, rather dangerous thus to excite Marshal Simon against me."

"Why?" asked Rodin, as he fixed a piercing look upon Father d'Aigrigny.

"Because the marshal, excited beyond all bounds, and remembering only our mutual hate, might seek me out—"

"Well! and what then?"

"Well! he might forget that I am a priest—"

"Oh, you are afraid, are you?" said Rodin, disdainfully, interrupting Father d'Aigrigny.

At the words: "You are afraid," the reverend father almost started from his chair; but recovering his coolness, he answered: "Your reverence is right; yes, I

should be afraid under such circumstances; I should be afraid of forgetting that I am a priest, and of remembering too well that I have been a soldier."

"Really?" said Rodin, with sovereign contempt. "You are still no further than that stupid and savage point of honor? Your cassock has not yet extinguished the warlike fire? So that if this brawling swordsman, whose poor, weak head, empty and sonorous as a drum, is so easily turned with the stupid jargon of 'military honor, oaths, Napoleon II.'—if this brawling bravo, I say, were to commit some violence against you, it would require a great effort, I suppose, for you to remain calm?"

"It is useless, I think," said Father d'Aigrigny, quite unable to control his agitation, "for your reverence to enter upon such questions."

"As your superior," answered Rodin, severely, "I have the right to ask. If Marshal Simon had lifted his hand against you—"

"Sir," cried the reverend father.

"There are no sirs here—we are only priests," said Rodin, harshly. Father d'Aigrigny held down his head, scarcely able to repress his rage.

"I ask you," continued Rodin, obstinately, "if Marshal Simon had struck you—? Is that clear?"

"Enough! in mercy," said Father d'Aigrigny, "enough!"

"Or, if you like it better, had Marshal Simon left the marks of his fingers on your cheek—?" resumed Rodin, with the utmost pertinacity.

Father d'Aigrigny, pale as death, ground his teeth in a kind of fury at the very idea of such an insult, while Rodin, who had no doubt his object in asking the question, raised his flabby eyelids, and seemed to watch attentively the significant symptoms revealed in the agitated countenance of the ex-colonel.

At length, recovering partly his presence of mind, Father d'Aigrigny replied, in a forcedly calm tone: "If I were to be exposed to such an insult, I would pray Heaven to give me resignation and humility."

"And no doubt Heaven would hear your prayers," said Rodin, coldly, satisfied with the trial to which he had just put him. "Besides, you are now warned, and it is not very probable," added he, with a grim smile, "that Marshal Simon will ever return to test your humility. But if he were

to return," said Rodin, fixing on the reverend father a long and piercing look, "you would know how to show this brutal swordsman, in spite of all his violence, what resignation and humility there is in a Christian soul!"

Two humble knocks at the door here interrupted the conversation for a moment. At footman entered, bearing a large sealed packet on a salver, which he presented to the princess. After this, he withdrew. The Princess de Saint-Dizier, having by a look asked Rodin's permission to open the letter, began to read it—and a cruel satisfaction was soon visible on her face.

"There is hope," cried she, addressing herself to Rodin; "the demand is rigorously legal, and the consequences may be such as we desire. In a word, my niece may, any day, be exposed to complete destitution. She, who is so extravagant! what a change in her life!"

"We shall then no doubt have some hold on that untamable character," said Rodin, with a meditative air; "for, till now, all has failed in that direction, and one would suppose some kinds of happiness are invulnerable," added the Jesuit, gnawing his flat and dirty nails.

"But, to obtain the result we desire, we

must exasperate my niece's pride. It is therefore absolutely necessary that I should see and talk to her," said the Princess de Saint-Dizier, reflecting.

"Mdlle. de Cardoville will refuse this interview," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Perhaps," replied the princess. "But she is so happy that her audacity must be at its height. Yes, yes—I know her—and I will write in such a manner that she will come."

"You think so?" asked Rodin, with a doubtful air.

"Do not fear it, father," answered the lady, "she will come. And her pride once brought into play, we may hope a good deal from it."

"We must then act, lady," resumed Rodin; "yes, act promptly. The moment approaches. Hate and suspicion are awake. There is not a moment to lose."

"As for hate," replied the princess, "Mdlle. de Cardoville must have seen to what her lawsuit would lead, about what she calls her illegal detention in a lunatic asylum, and that of the two young ladies in St. Mary's Convent. Thank Heaven, we have friends everywhere! I know from good authority that the case will break down from want of evidence, in spite of

the animosity of certain parliamentary magistrates, who shall be well remembered."

"Under these circumstances," replied Rodin, "the departure of the marshal gives us every latitude. We must act immediately on his daughters."

"But how?" said the princess.

"We must see them," resumed Rodin, "talk with them, study them. Then we shall act in consequence."

"But the soldier will not leave them a second," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Then," replied Rodin, "we must talk to them in presence of the soldier, and get him on our side."

"That hope is idle," cried Father d'Aigrigny. "You do not know the military honor of his character. You do not know this man."

"Don't I know him?" said Rodin, shrugging his shoulders. "Did not Mdlle. de Cardoville present me to him as her liberator, when I denounced you as the soul of the conspiracy? Did I not restore to him his ridiculous imperial relic—his cross of honor—when we met at Dr. Baleinier's? Did I not bring him back the girls from the convent, and place them in the arms of their father?"

"Yes," replied the princess; "but, since that time, my abominable niece has either guessed or discovered all. She told you so herself, father."

"She told me that she considered me her most mortal enemy," said Rodin. "Be it so. But did she tell the same to the marshal? Has she even mentioned me to him? and if she have done so, has the marshal communicated this circumstance to his soldier? It may be so; but it is by no means sure; in any case, I must ascertain the fact; if the soldier treats me as an enemy, we shall see what is next to be done—but I will first try to be received as a friend."

"When?" asked the princess.

"To-morrow morning," replied Rodin.

"Good heaven, my dear father!" cried the Princess de Saint-Dizier, in alarm; "if this soldier were to treat you as an enemy —beware—"

"I always beware, madame. I have had to face worse enemies than he is," said the Jesuit, showing his black teeth; "the cholera to begin with."

"But he may refuse to see you, and in what way will you then get at Marshal Simon's daughters?" said Father d'Aigrigny.

"I do not yet know," answered Rodin.

"But as I intend to do it, I shall find the means."

"Father," said the princess, suddenly, on reflection, "these girls have never seen me, and I might obtain admittance to them, without sending in my name."

"That would be perfectly useless at present, madame, for I must first know what course to take with respect to them. I must see and converse with them, at any cost, and then, after I have fixed my plan, your assistance may be very useful. In any case, please to be ready to-morrow, madame, to accompany me."

"To what place, father?"

"To Marshal Simon's."

"To the marshal's?"

"Not exactly. You will get into your carriage, and I will take a hackney-coach. I will then try to obtain an interview with the girls, and, during that time, you will wait for me at a few yards from the house. If I succeed, and require your aid, I will come and fetch you; I can give you my instructions, without any appearance of concert between us."

"I am content, reverend father; but, in truth, I tremble at the thought of your interview with that rough trooper."

"The Lord will watch over His servant,

madame!" replied Rodin. "As for you, father," added he, addressing the Abbe d'Aigrigny, "dispatch instantly to Vienna the note which is all prepared, to announce the departure and speedy arrival of the marshal. Every precaution has been taken. I shall write more fully this evening."

. . . . . .

The next morning, about eight o'clock, the Princess de Saint-Dizier in her carriage, and Rodin in his hackney-coach, took the direction of Marshal Simon's house.

CHAPTER LIII.

HAPPINESS.

MARSHAL SIMON has been absent two days. It is eight o'clock in the morning. Dagobert, walking on tiptoe with the greatest caution, so as not to make the floor creak beneath his tread, crosses the room which leads to the bedchamber of Rose and Blanche, and applies his ear to the door of the apartment. With equal caution, Spoilsport follows exactly the movements of his master. The countenance of the soldier is uneasy and full of thought. As he approaches the door,

he says to himself: "I hope the dear children heard nothing of what happened in the night! It would alarm them, and it is much better that they should not know it at present. It might afflict them sadly, poor dears! and they are so gay, so happy, since they feel sure of their father's love for them. They bore his departure so bravely! I would not for the world that they should know of this unfortunate event."

Then, as he listened, the soldier resumed: "I hear nothing—and yet they are always awake so early. Can it be sorrow."

Dagobert's reflections were here interrupted by two frank, hearty bursts of laughter from the interior of the bedroom.

"Come! they are not so sad as I thought," said the soldier, breathing more freely. "Probably, they know nothing about it."

Soon, the laughter was again heard with redoubled force, and the soldier, delighted at this gayety, so rare on the part of "his children," was much affected by it: the tears started to his eyes at the thought that the orphans had at length recovered the serenity natural to their age; then, passing from one emotion to the other, still listening at the door, with his body leaning forward and his hands resting on

his knees, Dagobert's lip quivered with an expression of mute joy, and, shaking his head a little, he accompanied with his silent laughter the increasing hilarity of the young girls. At last, as nothing is so contagious as gayety, and as the worthy soldier was in an ecstasy of joy, he finished by laughing aloud with all his might, without knowing why, and only because Rose and Blanche were laughing. Spoilsport had never seen his master in such a transport of delight; he looked at him for a while in deep and silent astonishment, and then began to bark in a questioning way.

At this well-known sound, the laughter within suddenly ceased, and a sweet voice, still trembling with joyous emotion, exclaimed: "Is it you, Spoilsport, that have come to wake us?" The dog understood what was said, wagged his tail, held down his ears, and approaching close to the door, answered the appeal of his young mistress by a kind of friendly growl.

"Spoilsport," said Rose, hardly able to restrain her laughter, "you are very early this morning."

"Tell us what o'clock it is, if you please, old fellow?" added Blanche.

"Young ladies, it is past eight," said suddenly the gruff voice of Dagobert, ac-

companying this piece of humor with a loud laugh.

A cry of gay surprise was heard, and then Rose resumed: "Good-morning, Dagobert."

"Good-morning, my children. You are very lazy to-day, I must tell you."

"It is not our fault. Our dear Augustine has not yet been to call us. We are waiting for her."

"Oh! there it is," said Dagobert to himself, his features once more assuming an expression of anxiety. Then he returned aloud, in a tone of some embarrassment, for the worthy man was no hand at a falsehood: "My children, your companion went out this morning—very early. She is gone to the country—on business—she will not return for some days—so you had better get up by yourselves for to-day."

"Our good Madame Augustine!" exclaimed Blanche, with interest. "I hope it is nothing bad that has made her leave so suddenly—eh, Dagobert?"

"No, no—not at all—only business," answered the soldier. "To see one of her relations."

"Oh, so much the better!" said Rose. "Well, Dagobert, when we call you can come in."

"I will come back in a quarter of an hour," said the soldier, as he withdrew; and he thought to himself: "I must lecture that fool Loony—for he is so stupid, and so fond of talking, that he will let it all out."

The name of the pretended simpleton will serve as a natural transition to inform the reader of the cause of the hilarity of the sisters. They were laughing at the numberless absurdities of the idiot. The girls rose and dressed themselves, each serving as lady's-maid to the other. Rose had combed and arranged Blanche's hair; it was now Blanche's turn to do the same for her sister. Thus occupied, they formed a charming picture. Rose was seated before the dressing-table; her sister, standing behind her, was smoothing her beautiful brown hair. Happy age! so little removed from childhood that present joy instantly obliterates the traces of past sorrow! But the sisters felt more than joy; it was happiness, deep and unalterable, for their father loved them, and their happiness was a delight, and not a pain to him. Assured of the affection of his children, he also, thanks to them, no longer feared any grief. To these three beings, thus certain of their mutual love, what was a momentary sep-

aration? Having explained this, we shall understand the innocent gayety of the sisters, notwithstanding their father's departure, and the happy, joyous expression which now filled with animation their charming faces, on which the late fading rose had begun once more to bloom. Their faith in the future gave to their countenances something resolute and decisive, which added a degree of piquancy to the beauty of their enchanting features.

Blanche, in smoothing her sister's hair, let fall the comb, and, as she was stooping to pick it up, Rose anticipated her, saying: "If it had been broken, we would have put it into the handle-basket."

Then the two laughed merrily at this expression, which reminded them of an admirable piece of folly on the part of Loony.

The supposed simpleton had broken the handle of a cup, and when the governess of the young ladies had reprimanded him for his carelessness, he had answered: "Never mind, madame; I have put it into the handle-basket."

"The handle-basket, what is that?"

"Yes, madame; it is where I keep all the handles I break off the things!"

"Dear me!" said Rose, drying her eyes;

"how silly it is to laugh at such foolishness."

"It is so droll," replied Blanche; "how can we help it?"

"All I regret is that father cannot hear us laugh."

"He was so happy to see us gay!"

"We must write to him to-day the story of the handle-basket."

"And that of the feather-brush, to show that, according to promise, we kept up our spirits during his absence."

"Write to him, sister? no, he is to write to us, and we are not to answer his letters."

"True! well then, I have an idea. Let us address letters to him here, Dagobert can put them into the post, and, on his return, our father will read our correspondence."

"That will be charming! What nonsense we will write to him, since he takes pleasure in it!"

"And we, too, like to amuse ourselves."

"Oh, certainly! father's last words have given us so much courage."

"As I listened to them, I felt quite reconciled to his going."

"When he said to us: 'My children, I will confide in you all I can. I go to ful-

fill a sacred duty, and I must be absent for some time; for though, when I was blind enough to doubt your affection, I could not make up my mind to leave you, my conscience was by no means tranquil. Grief takes such an effect on us that I had not the strength to come to a decision, and my days were passed in painful hesitation. But now that I am certain of your tenderness, all this irresolution has ceased, and I understand how one duty is not to be sacrificed to another, and that I have to perform two duties at once, both equally sacred; and this I now do with joy, and delight, and courage!' "

"Go on, sister!" cried Blanche, rising to draw nearer to Rose. "I think I hear our father, when I remember those words, which must console and support us during his absence."

"And then our father continued: 'Instead of grieving at my departure, you should rejoice in it, you should be proud and happy. I go to perform a good and generous act. Fancy to yourselves that there is somewhere a poor orphan, oppressed and abandoned by all—and that the father of that orphan was once my benefactor, and that I had promised him to protect his son—and that the life of that

son is now in peril—tell me, my children, would you regret that I should leave you to fly to the aid of such an orphan?' "

"'No, no, brave father!' we answered; 'we should not then be your daughters!' " continued Rose, with enthusiasm. "'Count upon us! We should be indeed unhappy if we thought that our sorrow could deprive thee of thy courage. Go! and every day we will say to ourselves proudly, "It was to perform a great and noble duty that our father left us—we can wait calmly for his return."' "

"How that idea of duty sustains one, sister!" resumed Rose, with growing enthusiasm. "It gave our father the courage to leave us without regret, and to us the courage to bear his absence gayly!"

"And then, how calm we are now! Those mournful dreams, which seemed to portend such sad events, no longer afflict us."

"I tell you, sister, this time we are really happy once for all."

"And then, do you feel like me? I fancy that I am stronger and more courageous, and that I could brave every danger."

"I should think so! We are strong enough now. Our father in the midst, you on one side, I on the other—"

"Dagobert in the vanguard, and Spoilsport in the rear! Then the army will be complete, and let 'em come on by thousands!" added a gruff, but jovial voice, interrupting the girl, as Dagobert appeared at the half-open door of the room. It was worth looking at his face, radiant with joy; for the old fellow had somewhat indiscreetly been listening to the conversation.

"Oh! you were listening, Paul Pry!" said Rose, gayly, as she entered the adjoining room with her sister, and both affectionately embraced the soldier.

"To be sure, I was listening; and I only regretted not to have ears as large as Spoilsport's! Brave, good girls! that's how I like to see you—bold as brass, and saying to care and sorrow: 'Right about face! march! go to the devil!' "

"He will want to make us swear, now," said Rose to her sister, laughing with all her might.

"Well! now and then, it does no harm," said the soldier; "it relieves and calms one, when if one could not swear by five hundred thousand de—"

"That's enough!" said Rose, covering with her pretty hand the gray mustache, so as to stop Dagobert in his speech. "If Madame Augustine heard you—"

"Our poor governess! so mild and timid," resumed Blanche.

"How you would frighten her!"

"Yes," said Dagobert, as he tried to conceal his rising embarrassment; "but she does not hear us. She is gone into the country."

"Good, worthy woman!" replied Blanche, with interest. "She said something of you which shows her excellent heart."

"Certainly," resumed Rose; "for she said to us, in speaking of you, 'Ah, young ladies! my affection must appear very little, compared with M. Dagobert's. But I feel that I also have the right to devote myself for you.'"

"No doubt, no doubt! she has a heart of gold," answered Dagobert. Then he added to himself, "It's as if they did it on purpose, to bring the conversation back to this poor woman."

"Father made a good choice," continued Rose. "She is the widow of an old officer, who was with him in the wars."

"When we were out of spirits," said Blanche, "you should have seen her uneasiness and grief, and how earnestly she set about consoling us."

"I have seen the tears in her eyes when

she looked at us," resumed Rose. "Oh! she loves us tenderly, and we return her affection. With regard to that, Dagobert, we have a plan as soon as our father comes back."

"Be quiet, sister!" said Blanche, laughing. "Dagobert will not keep our secret."

"He!"

"Will you keep it for us, Dagobert?"

"I tell you what," said the soldier, more and more embarrassed; "you had better not tell it me."

"What! can you keep nothing from Madame Augustine?"

"Ah, Dagobert! Dagobert!" said Blanche, gayly holding up her finger at the soldier; "I suspect you very much of paying court to our governess."

"I pay court?" said the soldier—and the expression of his face was so rueful, as he pronounced these words, that the two sisters burst out laughing.

Their hilarity was at its height when the door opened, and Loony advanced into the room, announcing, with a loud voice, "M. Rodin!" In fact, the Jesuit glided almost imperceptibly into the apartment, as if to take possession of the ground. Once there, he thought the game his own, and his reptile eyes sparkled with joy. It

would be difficult to paint the surprise of the two sisters, and the anger of the soldier, at this unexpected visit.

Rushing upon Loony, Dagobert seized him by the collar, and exclaimed: "Who gave you leave to introduce any one here, without my permission?"

"Pardon, M. Dagobert!" said Loony, throwing himself on his knees, and clasping his hands with an air of idiotic entreaty.

"Leave the room!—and you too!" added the soldier, with a menacing gesture, as he turned toward Rodin, who had already approached the girls, with a paternal smile on his countenance.

"I am at your orders, my dear sir," said the priest, humbly; and he made a low bow, but without stirring from the spot.

"Will you go?" cried the soldier to Loony, who was still kneeling; and who, thanks to the advantages of this position, was able to utter a certain number of words, before Dagobert could remove him.

"M. Dagobert," said Loony in a doleful voice, "I beg pardon for bringing up the gentleman without leave; but, alas! my head is turned, because of the misfortune that happened to Madame Augustine!"

"What misfortune?" cried Rose and Blanche together, as they advanced anxiously toward Loony.

"Will you go!" thundered Dagobert, shaking the servant by the collar, to force him to rise.

"Speak—speak!" said Blanche, interposing between the soldier and his prey. "What has happened to Madame Augustine?"

"Oh!" shouted Loony, in spite of the cuffs of the soldier. "Madame Augustine was attacked in the night with cholera, and taken—"

He was unable to finish. Dagobert struck him a tremendous blow with his fist, right on the jaw, and, putting forth his still formidable strength, the old horse-grenadier lifted him to his legs, and, with one violent kick bestowed on the lower part of his back, sent him rolling into the antechamber.

Then, turning to Rodin, with flushed cheek and sparkling eye, Dagobert pointed to the door with an expressive gesture, and said in an angry voice: "Now, be off with you—and that quickly!"

"I must pay my respects another time, my dear sir," said Rodin, as he retired toward the door, bowing to the young girls.

CHAPTER LIV.

DUTY.

RODIN, retreating slowly before the fire of Dagobert's angry looks, walked backward to the door, casting oblique but piercing glances on the orphans, who were visibly affected by the servant's intentional indiscretion. (Dagobert had ordered him not to speak before the girls of the illness of their governess, and that was quite enough to induce the simpleton to take the first opportunity of doing so.)

Rose hastily approached the soldier, and said to him, "Is it true—is it really true, that poor Madame Augustine has been attacked with the cholera?"

"No—I do not know—I cannot tell," replied the soldier, hesitating; "besides, what is it to you?"

"Dagobert, you would conceal from us a calamity," said Blanche. "I remember now your embarrassment when we spoke to you of our governess."

"If she is ill we ought not to abandon her. She had pity on our sorrows; we ought to pity her sufferings."

"Come, sister; come to her room," said Blanche, advancing toward the door, where Rodin had stopped short, and stood listen-

ing with growing attention to this unexpected scene, which seemed to give him ample food for thought.

"You will not leave this room," said the soldier, sternly, addressing the two sisters.

"Dagobert," replied Rose, firmly, "it is a sacred duty, and it would be cowardice not to fulfill it."

"I tell you that you shall not leave the room," said the soldier, stamping his foot with impatience.

"Dagobert," replied Blanche, with as resolute an air as her sister's, and with a kind of enthusiasm which brought the blood to her fair cheek, "our father, when he left us, gave us an admirable example of devotion and duty. He would not forgive us were we to forget the lesson."

"What!" cried Dagobert, in a rage, and advancing toward the sisters to prevent their quitting the apartment; "you think that if your governess had the cholera I would let you go to her under the pretext of duty? Your duty is to live, to live happy, for your father's sake—and for mine into the bargain—so not a word more of such folly!"

"We can run no danger by going to our governess in her room," said Rose.

"And if there were danger," added

Blanche, "we ought not to hesitate. So, Dagobert, be good! and let us pass."

Rodin, who had listened to what precedes, with sustained attention, suddenly started, as if a thought had struck him; his eye shone brightly, and an expression of fatal joy illumined his countenance.

"Dagobert, do not refuse!" said Blanche. "You would do for us what you reproach us with wishing to do for another."

Dagobert had, as it were, till now, stood in the path of the Jesuit and the twins, by keeping close to the door; but, after a moment's reflection, he shrugged his shoulders, stepped on one side, and said, calmly: "I was an old fool. Come, young ladies; if you find Madame Augustine in the house, I will allow you to remain with her." Surprised at these words, the girls stood motionless and irresolute.

"If our governess is not here, where is she, then?" said Rose.

"You think, perhaps, that I am going to tell you, in the excitement in which you are!"

"She is dead!" cried Rose, growing pale.

"No, no—be calm," said the soldier, hastily, "I swear to you, by your father's honor, that she is not dead. At the first

appearance of the disorder, she begged to be removed from the house, fearing the contagion for those in it."

"Good and courageous woman!" said Rose, tenderly. "And you will not allow us—"

"I will not allow you to go out, even if I have to lock you up in your room," cried the soldier, again stamping with rage; then, remembering that the blunderhead's indiscretion was the sole cause of this unfortunate incident, he added, with concentrated fury, "Oh! I will break my stick upon that rascal's back."

So saying, he turned toward the door, where Rodin still stood, silent and attentive, dissembling with habitual impassibility the fatal hopes he had just conceived in his brain. The girls, no longer doubting the removal of their governess, and convinced that Dagobert would not tell them whither they had conveyed her, remained pensive and sad.

At sight of the priest, whom he had forgotten for the moment, the soldier's rage increased, and he said to him roughly: "Are you still there?"

"I would merely observe to you, my dear sir," said Rodin, with that air of perfect good-nature which he knew so well

how to assume, "that you were standing before the door, which naturally prevented me from going out."

"Well, now nothing prevents you—so file off!"

"Certainly, I will file off, if you wish it, my dear sir; though I think I have some reason to be surprised at such a reception."

"It is no reception at all—so begone!"

"I had come, my dear sir, to speak to you—"

"I have no time for talking."

"Upon business of great importance."

"I have no other business of importance than to remain with these children."

"Very good, my dear sir," said Rodin, pausing on the threshold. "I will not disturb you any longer; excuse my indiscretion. The bearer of excellent news from Marshal Simon, I came—"

"News from our father!" cried Rose, drawing nearer to Rodin.

"Oh, speak, speak, sir!" added Blanche.

"You have news of the marshal!" said Dagobert, glancing suspiciously at Rodin. "Pray, what is this news?"

But Rodin, without immediately answering the question, returned from the threshhold into the room, and, contemplating Rose

and Blanche by turns with admiration, he resumed: "What happiness for me, to be able to bring some pleasure to these dear young ladies! They are even as I left them, graceful, and fair, and charming—only less sad than on the day when I fetched them from the gloomy convent in which they were kept prisoners, to restore them to the arms of their glorious father!"

"That was their place, and this is not yours," said Dagobert, harshly, still holding the door open, behind Rodin.

"Confess, at least, that I was not so much out of place at Dr. Baleinier's," said the Jesuit, with a cunning air. "You know, for it was there that I restored to you the noble imperial cross you so much regretted—the day when that good Mdlle. de Cardoville only prevented you from strangling me by telling you that I was her liberator. Ay! it was just as I have the honor of stating, young ladies," added Rodin, with a smile; "this brave soldier was very near strangling me, for, be it said without offense, he has, in spite of his age, a grasp of iron. Ha, ha! the Prussians and Cossacks must know that better than I!"

These few words reminded Dagobert and the twins of the service which Rodin had

really rendered them; and though the marshal had heard Mdlle. de Cardoville speak of Rodin as of a very dangerous man, he had forgotten in the midst of so many anxieties to communicate this circumstance to Dagobert. But this latter, warned by experience, felt, in spite of favorable appearances, a secret aversion for the Jesuit; so he replied abruptly: "The strength of my grasp has nothing to do with the matter."

"If I allude to that little innocent playfulness on your part, my dear sir," said Rodin in the softest tone, approaching the two sisters with a wriggle which was peculiar to him; "if I allude to it you see it was suggested by the involuntary recollection of the little services I was happy enough to render you." Dagobert looked fixedly at Rodin, who instantly veiled his glance beneath his flabby eyelids.

"First of all," said the soldier after a moment's silence, "a true man never speaks of the services he has rendered, and you come back three times to the subject."

"But, Dagobert," whispered Rose, "if he bring news of our father?"

The soldier made a sign, as if to beg the girl to let him speak, and resumed, looking

full at Rodin: "You are cunning, but I'm no raw recruit."

"I cunning?" said Rodin, with a sanctified air.

"Yes, very. You think to puzzle me with your fine phrases; but I'm not to be caught in that way. Just listen to me. Some of your band of black-gowns stole my cross; you returned it to me. Some of the same band carried off these children; you brought them back. It is also true that you denounced the renegade D'Aigrigny. But all this only proves two things: first, that you were vile enough to be the accomplice of these scoundrels; and secondly, that, having being their accomplice, you were base enough to betray them. Now, those two facts are equally bad, and I suspect you most furiously. So march off at once; your presence is not good for these children."

"But, my dear sir—"

"I will have no buts," answered Dagobert, in an angry voice. "When a man of your look does good, it is only to hide some evil; and one must be on guard."

"I understand your suspicions," said Rodin coolly, hiding his growing disappointment, for he had hoped it would have been easy to coax the soldier; "but, if you

reflect, what interest have I in deceiving you? and in what should the deception consist?"

"You have some interest or other in persisting to remain here, when I tell you to go away."

"I have already had the honor of informing you of the object of my visit, my dear sir."

"To bring news of Marshal Siman?"

"That is exactly the case. I am happy enough to have news of the marshal. Yes, my dear young ladies," added Rodin, as he again approached the two sisters, to recover, as it were, the ground he had lost, "I have news of your glorious father!"

"Then come to my room directly, and you can tell it to me," replied Dagobert.

"What! you would be cruel enough to deprive these dear ladies of the pleasure—"

"By heaven, sir!" cried Dagobert, in a voice of thunder, "you will make me forget myself. I should be sorry to fling a man of your age down the stairs. Will you begone?"

"Well, well," said Rodin, mildly, "do not be angry with the poor old man. I am really not worth the trouble. I will go with you to your room, and tell you what I have to communicate. You will

repent not having let me speak before these dear young ladies; but that will be your punishment, naughty man!"

So saying, Rodin again bowed very low, and, concealing his rage and vexation, left the room before Dagobert, who made a sign to the two sisters, and then followed, closing the door after him.

"What news of our father?" said Rose anxiously, when the soldier returned, after a quarter of an hour's absence.

"Well, that old conjuror knows that the marshal set out in good spirits, and he seems acquainted with M. Robert. How could he be informed of all this? I cannot tell," added the soldier, with a thoughtful air; "but it is only another reason to be on one's guard against him."

"But what news of our father?" asked Rose.

"One of that old rascal's friends (I think him a rascal still) knows your father, he tells me, and met him five-and-twenty leagues from here. Knowing that this man was coming to Paris, the marshal charged him to let you know that he was in perfect health, and hoped soon to see you again."

"Oh, what happiness!" cried Rose.

"You see, you were wrong to suspect

the poor old man, Dagobert," added Blanche. "You treated him so harshly!"

"Possibly so; but I am not sorry for it."

"And why?"

"I have good reasons; and one of the best is that, when I saw him come in, and go sidling and creeping round about us, I felt chilled to the marrow of my bones, without knowing why. Had I seen a serpent crawling toward you, I should not have been more frightened. I knew, of course, that he could not hurt you in my presence; but I tell you, my children, in spite of the services he has no doubt rendered us, it was all I could do to refrain from throwing him out of window. Now, this manner of proving my gratitude is not natural, and one must be on one's guard against people who inspire us with such ideas."

"Good Dagobert, it is your affection for us that makes you so suspicious," said Rose, in a coaxing tone; "it proves how much you love us."

CHAPTER LV.

THE IMPROVISED HOSPITAL.

AMONG a greater number of temporary hospitals opened at the time of the cholera

in every quarter of Paris, one had been established on the ground floor of a large house in the Rue du Mont-Blanc.

The vacant apartments had been generously placed by their proprietor at the disposal of the authorities; and to this place were carried a number of persons, who, being suddenly attacked with the contagion, were considered in too dangerous a state to be removed to the principal hospitals.

Two days had elapsed since Rodin's visit to Marshal Simon's daughters. Shortly after he had been expelled, the Princess de Saint-Dizier had entered to see them, under the cloak of being a house-to-house visitor to collect funds for the cholera sufferers.

Choosing the moment when Dagobert, deceived by her ladylike demeanor, had withdrawn, she counseled the twins that it was their duty to go and see their governess, whom she stated to be in the hospital we now describe.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning.

The persons who had watched during the night by the sick people, in the hospital established in the Rue du Mont-Blanc, were about to be relieved by other voluntary assistants.

"Well, gentlemen," said one of the newly arrived, "how are we getting on? Has there been any decrease last night in the number of the sick?"

"Unfortunately, no; but the doctors think the contagion has reached its height."

"Then there is some hope of seeing it decrease."

"And have any of the gentlemen, whose places we come to take, been attacked by the disease?"

"We came eleven strong last night; we are only nine now."

"That is bad. Were these two persons taken off rapidly?"

"One of the victims, a young man of twenty-five years of age, a cavalry officer on furlough, was struck as it were by lightning. In less than a quarter of an hour he was dead. Though such facts are frequent, we were speechless with horror."

"Poor young man!"

"He had a word of cordial encouragement and hope for every one. He had so far succeeded in raising the spirits of the patients that some of them, who were less affected by the cholera than by the fear of it, were able to quit the hospital nearly well."

"What a pity! So good a young man! Well, he died gloriously; it requires as much courage as on the field of battle."

"He had only one rival in zeal and courage, and that is a young priest, with an angelic countenance, whom they call the Abbe Gabriel. He is indefatigable; he hardly takes an hour's rest, but runs from one to the other, and offers himself to everybody. He forgets nothing. The consolations which he offers come from the depths of his soul, and are not mere formalities in the way of his profession. No, no, I saw him weep over a poor woman, whose eyes he had closed after a dreadful agony. Oh, if all priests were like him!"

"No doubt, a good priest is most worthy of respect. But who is the other victim of last night?"

"Oh! his death was frightful. Do not speak of it. I have still the horrible scene before my eyes."

"A sudden attack of the cholera?"

"If it had only been the contagion, I should not so shudder at the remembrance."

"What then did he die of?"

"It is a string of horrors. Three days ago, they brought here a man, who was supposed to be only attacked with cholera.

You have no doubt heard speak of this personage. He is the lion-tamer that drew all Paris to the Porte Saint-Martin."

"I know the man you mean. Called Morok. He performed a kind of play with a tame panther."

"Exactly so; I was myself present at a similar scene, in which a stranger, an Indian, in consequence of a wager, it was said at the time, jumped upon the stage and killed the panther."

"Well, this Morok, brought here as a cholera patient, and indeed with all the symptoms of the contagion, soon showed signs of a still more frightful malady."

"And this was—"

"Hydrophobia."

"Did he become mad?"

"Yes; he confessed that he had been bitten a few days before by one of the mastiffs of the menagerie; unfortunately, we only learned this circumstance after the terrible attack, which cost the life of the poor fellow we deplore."

"How did it happen, then?"

"Morok was in a room with three other patients. Suddenly seized with a sort of furious delirium, he rose, uttering ferocious cries, and rushed raving mad into

the passage. Our poor friend made an attempt to stop him. This kind of resistance increased the frenzy of Morok, who threw himself on the man that crossed his path, and, tearing him with his teeth, fell down in horrible convulsions."

"Oh! you are right. 'Twas indeed frightful. And, notwithstanding every assistance, this victim of Morok's—"

"Died during the night, in dreadful agony; for the shock had been so violent that brain fever almost instantly declared itself."

"And is Morok dead?"

"I do not know. He was to be taken to another hsopital, after being fast bound in the state of weakness which generally succeeds the fit. But, till he can be removed, he has been confined in a room upstairs."

"But he cannot recover."

"I should think he must be dead by this time. The doctors did not give him twenty-four hours to live."

The persons engaged in this conversation were standing in an ante-chamber on the ground-floor, in which usually assembled those who came to offer their voluntary aid to the sick. One door of this room communicated with the rest of the hospital,

and the other with the passage that opened upon the courtyard.

"Dear me!" said one of the two speakers, looking through the window. "See what two charming girls have just got out of that elegant carriage. How much alike they are! Such a resemblance is indeed extraordinary."

"No doubt they are twins. Poor young girls! dressed in mourning. They have perhaps lost father or mother."

"One would imagine they were coming this way."

"Yes, they are coming up the steps."

And indeed Rose and Blanche soon entered the ante-chamber, with a timid, anxious air, though a sort of feverish excitement was visible in their looks. One of the two men that were talking together, moved by the embarrassment of the girls, advanced toward them, and said, in a tone of attentive politeness: "Is there anything I can do for you, ladies?"

"Is not this, sir," replied Rose, "the infirmary of the Rue du Mont-Blanc?"

"Yes, miss."

"A lady, called Madame Augustine du Tremblay, was brought here, we are told, about two days ago. Could we see her?"

"I would observe to you, miss, that there

is some danger in entering the sick-wards."

"It is a dear friend that we wish to see," answered Rose, in a mild and firm tone, which sufficiently expressed that she was determined to brave the danger.

"I cannot be sure, miss," resumed the other, "that the person you seek is here; but, if you will take the trouble to walk into this room on the left, you will find there the good sister Martha; she has the care of the women's wards, and will give you all the information you can desire."

"Thank you, sir," said Blanche, with a graceful bow; and she and her sister entered together the apartment which had been pointed out to them.

"They are really charming," said the man, looking after the two sisters, who soon disappeared from his view. "It would be a great pity if—"

He was unable to finish. A frightful tumult, mingled with cries of alarm and horror, rose suddenly from the adjoining rooms. Almost instantly, two doors were thrown open, and a number of the sick, half-naked, pale, fleshless, and their features convulsed with terror, rushed into the ante-chamber, exclaiming: "Help! help! the madman!" It is impossible to paint

the scene of despairing and furious confusion which followed this panic of so many affrighted wretches, flying to the only other door, to escape from the peril they dreaded, and there, struggling and trampling on each other to pass through the narrow entrance.

At the moment when the last of these unhappy creatures succeeded in reaching the door, dragging himself along upon his bleeding hands, for he had been thrown down and almost crushed in the confusion —Morok, the object of so much terror— Morok himself appeared. He was a horrible sight. With the exception of a rag bound about his middle, his wan form was entirely naked, and from his bare legs still hung the remnants of the cords he had just broken. His thick, yellow hair stood almost on end, his beard bristled, his savage eyes rolled full of blood in their orbits, and shone with a glassy brightness; his lips were covered with foam; from time to time he uttered hoarse, guttural cries. The veins, visible on his iron limbs, were swollen almost to bursting. He bounded like a wild beast, and stretched out before him his bony and quivering hands. At the moment Morok reached the doorway, by which those he pursued made their escape,

some persons, attracted by the noise, managed to close this door from without, while others secured that which communicated with the sick-wards.

Morok thus found himself a prisoner. He ran to the window to force it open, and throw himself into the courtyard. But, stopping suddenly, he drew back from the glittering panes, seized with that invincible horror which all the victims of hydrophobia feel at the sight of any shining object, particularly glass. The unfortunate creatures whom he had pursued saw him from the courtyard exhausting himself in furious efforts to open the doors that had just been closed upon him. Then, perceiving the inutility of his attempts, he uttered savage cries and rushed furiously round the room, like a wild beast that seeks in vain to escape from its cage.

But, suddenly, those spectators of this scene, who had approached nearest to the window, uttered a loud exclamation of fear and anguish. Morok had perceived the little door which led to the closet occupied by Sister Martha, where Rose and Blanche had entered a few minutes before. Hoping to get out by this way, Morok drew the door violently toward him, and succeeded in half opening it, notwithstand-

ng the resistance he experienced from the inside. For an instant, the affrighted crowd saw the stiffened arms of Sister Martha and the orphans, clinging to the door, and holding it back with all their might.

CHAPTER LVI.

HYDROPHOBIA.

WHEN the sick people, assembled in the courtyard, saw the desperate efforts of Morok to force the door of the room which contained Sister Martha and the orphans, their fright redoubled. "It is all over with Sister Martha!" cried they.

"The door will give way."

"And the closet has no other entrance."

"There are two young girls in mourning with her."

"Come! we must not leave these poor women to encounter the madman. Follow me, friends!" cried generously one of the spectators, who was still blessed with health, and he rushed toward the steps to return to the ante-chamber.

"It's too late! it's only exposing yourself in vain," cried many persons, holding him back by force.

At this moment, voices were heard, exclaiming:

"Here is the Abbe Gabriel."

"He is coming downstairs. He has heard the noise."

"He is asking what is the matter."

"What will he do?"

Gabriel, occupied with a dying person in a neighboring room, had, indeed, just learned that Morok, having broken his bonds, had succeeded in escaping from the chamber in which he had been temporarily confined. Foreseeing the terrible dangers which might result from the escape of the lion-tamer, the missionary consulted only his courage, and hastened down, in the hope of preventing greater misfortunes. In obedience to his orders, an attendant followed him, bearing a brazier full of hot cinders, on which lay several irons, at a white heat, used by the doctors in cauterizing, in desperate cases of cholera.

The angelic countenance of Gabriel was very pale; but calm intrepidity shone upon his noble brow. Hastily crossing the passage, and making his way through the crowd, he went straight to the antechamber door. As he approached it, one of the sick people said to him, in a lamentable voice: "Ah, sir! it is all over. Those who

can see through the window say that Sister Martha is lost."

Gabriel made no answer, but grasped the key of the door. Before entering the room, however, he turned to the attendant, and said to him in a firm voice: "Are the irons of a white heat?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then wait here, and be ready. As for you, my friends," he added, turning to some of the sick, who shuddered with terror, "as soon as I enter shut the door after me. I will answer for the rest. And you, friend, only bring your irons when I call."

And the young missionary turned the key in the lock. At this juncture a cry of alarm, pity and admiration rose from every lip, and the spectators drew back from the door, with an involuntary feeling of fear. Raising his eyes to Heaven, as if to invoke its assistance at this terrible moment, Gabriel pushed open the door, and immediately closed it behind him. He was alone with Morok.

The lion-tamer, by a last furious effort, had almost succeeded in opening the door, to which Sister Martha and the orphans were clinging, in a fit of terror, uttering piercing cries. At the sound of Gabriel's footsteps, Morok turned round suddenly.

Then, instead of continuing his attack on the closet, he sprung, with a roar and a bound, upon the newcomer.

During this time, Sister Martha and the orphans, not knowing the cause of the sudden retreat of their assailant, took advantage of the opportunity to close and bolt the door, and thus placed themselves in security from a new attack. Morok, with his haggard eye, and teeth convulsively clinched, had rushed upon Gabriel, his hands extended to seize him by the throat. The missionary stood the shock valiantly. Guessing, at a glance, the intention of his adversary, he seized him by the wrists as he advanced, and, holding him back, bent him down violently with a vigorous hand. For a second, Morok and Gabriel remained mute, breathless, motionless, gazing on each other; then the missionary strove to conquer the efforts of the madman, who, with violent jerks, attempted to throw himself upon him, and to seize and tear him with his teeth.

Suddenly the lion-tamer's strength seemed to fail, his knees quivered, his livid head sunk upon his shoulder, his eyes closed. The missionary, supposing that a momentary weakness had succeeded to the fit of rage, and that the wretch was about

to fall, relaxed his hold in order to lend him assistance. But no sooner did he feel himself at liberty, thanks to his crafty device, than Morok flung himself furiously upon Gabriel. Surprised by this sudden attack, the latter stumbled, and at once felt himself clasped in the iron arms of the madman. Yet, with redoubled strength and energy, struggling breast to breast, foot to foot, the missionary in his turn succeeded in tripping up his adversary, and, throwing him with a vigorous effort, again seized his hands, and now held him down beneath his knee. Having thus completely mastered him, Gabriel turned his head to call for assistance, when Morok, by a desperate strain, succeeded in raising himself a little, and seized with his teeth the left arm of the missionary. At this sharp, deep, horrible bite, which penetrated to the very bone, Gabriel could not restrain a scream of anguish and horror. He strove in vain to disengage himself, for his arm was held fast, as in a vise, between the firm-set jaws of Morok.

This frightful scene had lasted less time than it has taken in the description, when suddenly the door leading to the passage was violently opened, and several courageous men, who had learned from the pa-

tients to what danger the young priest was exposed, came rushing to his assistance, in spite of his recommendation not to enter till he should call. The attendant was among the number, with the brazier and the hot irons. Gabriel, as soon as he perceived him, said to him in an agitated voice: "Quick, friend! your iron. Thank God! I had thought of that."

One of the men who had entered the room was luckily provided with a blanket; and the moment the missionary succeeded in wresting his arm from the clinched teeth of Morok, whom he still held down with his knee, this blanket was thrown over the madman's head, so that he could now be held and bound without danger, notwithstanding his desperate resistance. Then Gabriel rose, tore open the sleeve of his cassock, and laying bare his left arm, on which a deep bite was visible, bleeding, of a bluish color, he beckoned the attendant to draw near, seized one of the hot irons, and, with a firm and sure hand, twice applied the burning metal to the wound, with a calm heroism which struck all the spectators with admiration. But soon so many various emotions, intrepidly sustained, were followed by a natural reaction. Large drops of sweat stood upon Gabriel's

brow; his long light hair clung to his temples; he grew deadly pale, reeled, lost his senses, and was carried into the next room to receive immediate attention.

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An accidental circumstance, likely enough to occur, had converted one of the Princess de Saint-Dizier's falsehoods into a truth. To induce the orphans to go to the hospital, she had told them Gabriel was there, which at the time she was far from believing. On the contrary, she would have wished to prevent a meeting, which, from the attachment of the missionary to the girls, might interfere with her projects. A little while after the terrible scene we have just related, Rose and Blanche, accompanied by Sister Martha, entered a vast room of a strange and fatal aspect, containing a number of women who had suddenly been seized with cholera.

These immense apartments, generously supplied for the purpose of a temporary hospital, had been furnished with excessive luxury. The room now occupied by the sick women of whom we speak had been used for a ball-room. The white panels glittered with sumptuous gilding, and magnificent pier-glasses occupied the space between the windows, through which

could be seen the fresh verdure of a pleasant garden, smiling beneath the influence of budding May. In the midst of all this gilded luxury, on a rich, inlaid floor of costly woods, were seen arranged in regular order four rows of beds, of every shape and kind, from the humble truckle-bed to the handsome couch in carved mahogany.

This long room was divided into two compartments by a temporary partition, four or five feet in height. They had thus been able to manage the four rows of beds. This partition finished at some little distance from either end of the room, so as to leave an open space without beds, for the volunteer attendants, when the sick did not require their aid. At one of these extremities of the room was a lofty and magnificent marble chimney-piece, ornamented with gilt bronze. On the fire beneath, various drinks were brewing for the patients. To complete the singular picture, women of every class took their turns in attending upon the sick, to whose sighs and groans they always responded with consoling words of hope and pity. Such was the place, strange and mournful, that Rose and Blanche entered together, hand in hand, a short time after Gabriel had displayed such heroic courage in the strug-

gle against Morok. Sister Martha accompanied Marshal Simon's daughters. After speaking a few words to them in a whisper, she pointed out to them the two divisions in which the beds were arranged, and herself went to the other end of the room to give some orders.

The orphans, still under the impression of the terrible danger from which Gabriel had rescued them without their knowing it, were both excessively pale; yet their eyes were expressive of firm resolution. They had determined not only to perform what they considered an imperative duty, but to prove themselves worthy of their valiant father; they were acting, too, for their mother's sake, since they had been told that, dying in Siberia without receiving the sacrament, her eternal felicity might depend on the proofs they gave of Christian devotion. Need we add that the Princess de Saint-Dizier, following the advice of Rodin, had, in a second interview, skillfully brought about without the knowledge of Dagobert, taken advantage of the excitable qualities of these poor, confiding, simple and generous souls by a fatal exaggeration of the most noble and courageous sentiments. The orphans, having asked Sister Martha if Madame Augustine du

Tremblay had been brought to this asylum within the last three days, that person had answered that she really did not know, but, if they would go through the women's wards, it would be easy for them to ascertain. For the abominable hypocrite, who, in conjunction with Rodin, had sent these two children to encounter a mortal peril, had told an impudent falsehood when she affirmed that their governess had been removed to this hospital. During their exile, and their toilsome journey with Dagobert, the sisters had been exposed to many hard trials. But never had they witnessed so sad a spectacle as that which now offered itself to their view.

The long rows of beds, on which so many poor creatures writhed in agony, some uttering deep groans, some only a dull rattle in the throat, some raving in the delirium of fever, or calling on those from whom they were about to part forever—these frightful sights and sounds, which are too much even for brave men, would inevitably (such was the execrable design of Rodin and his accomplices) make a fatal impression on these young girls, urged by the most generous motives to undertake this perilous visit. And then—sad memory! which awoke, in all its deep and poignant bitter-

ness, by the side of the first beds they came to—it was of this very malady, the Cholera, that their mother had died a painful death. Fancy the twins entering this vast room, of so fearful an aspect, and, already much shaken by the terror which Morok had inspired, pursuing their search in the midst of these unfortunate creatures, whose dying pangs reminded them every instant of the dying agony of their mother! For a moment, at sight of the funereal hall, Rose and Blanche had felt their resolution fail them. A black presentiment made them regret the heroic imprudence; and, moreover, since several minutes they had begun to feel an icy shudder, and painful shootings across the temples; but, attributing these symptoms to the fright occasioned by Morok, their good and valiant natures soon stifled all these fears. They exchanged glances of affection, their courage revived, and both of them—Rose on one side of the partition, and Blanche on the other—proceeded with their painful task. Gabriel, carried to the doctors' private room, had soon recovered his senses. Thanks to his courage and presence of mind, his wound, cauterized in time, could have no dangerous consequences. As soon as it was dressed he insisted on returning

to the women's ward, where he had been offering pious consolations to a dying person at the moment they had come to inform him of the frightful danger caused by the escape of Morok.

A few minutes before the missionary entered the room, Rose and Blanche arrived almost together at the term of their mournful search, one from the left, the other from the right-hand row of beds, separated by the partition which divided the hall into compartments. The sisters had not yet seen each other. Their steps tottered as they advanced, and they were forced, from time to time, to lean against the beds as they passed along. Their strength was rapidly failing them. Giddy with fear and pain, they appeared to act almost mechanically. Alas! the orphans had been seized almost at the same moment with the terrible symptoms of cholera. In consequence of that species of physiological phenomenon, of which we have already spoken—a phenomenon by no means rare in twins, which had already been displayed on one or two occasions of their sickness—their organizations seemed liable to the same sensations, the same simultaneous accidents, like two flowers on one stem, which bloom and fade together.

The sight of so much suffering, and so many deaths, had accelerated the development of this dreadful disease. Already, on their agitated and altered countenances, they bore the mortal tokens of the contagion, as they came forth, each on her own side, from the two subdivisions of the room in which they had vainly sought their governess. Until now separated by the partition, Rose and Blanche had not yet seen each other; but, when at length their eyes met, there ensued a heartrending scene.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

To the charming freshness of the sisters' faces had succeeded a livid pallor. Their large blue eyes, now hollow and sunk in, appeared of enormous dimensions. Their lips, once so rosy, were now suffused with a violet hue, and a similar color was gradually displacing the transparent carmine of their cheeks and fingers. It was as if all the roses in their charming countenances were fading and turning blue before the icy blast of death.

When the orphans met, tottering and hardly able to sustain themselves, a cry of mutual horror burst from their lips. Each

of them exclaimed, at sight of the fearful change in her sister's features, "Are you also ill, sister?" And then, bursting into tears, they threw themselves into each other's arms, and looked anxiously at one another.

"Good heaven, Rose! how pale you are!"

"Like you, sister."

"And do you feel a cold shudder?"

"Yes, and my sight fails me."

"My bosom is all on fire."

"Sister, we are perhaps going to die."

"Let it only be together!"

"And our poor father?"

"And Dagobert?"

"Sister, our dream has come true!" cried Rose, almost deliriously, as she threw her arms round Blanche's neck. "Look! look! the Angel Gabriel is here to fetch us."

Indeed, at this moment, Gabriel entered the open space at the end of the room.

"Heavens! what do I see?" cried the young priest. "The daughters of Marshal Simon!"

And, rushing forward, he received the sisters in his arms, for they were no longer able to stand. Already their drooping heads, their half-closed eyes, their painful and difficult breathing, announced the ap-

proach of death. Sister Martha was close at hand. She hastened to respond to the call of Gabriel. Aided by this pious woman, he was able to lift the orphans upon a bed reserved for the doctor in attendance. For fear that the sight of this mournful agony should make too deep an impression on the other patients, Sister Martha drew a large curtain, and the sisters were thus in some sort walled off from the rest of the room. Their hands had been so tightly clasped together, during a nervous paroxysm, that it was impossible to separate them. It was in this position that the first remedies were applied—remedies incapable of conquering the violence of the disease, but which at least mitigated for a few moments the excessive pains they suffered, and restored some faint glimmer of perception to their obscured and troubled senses. At this moment, Gabriel was leaning over the bed with a look of inexpressible grief. With breaking heart, and face bathed in tears, he thought of the strange destiny which thus made him a witness of the death of these girls, his relations, whom but a few months before he had rescued from the horrors of the tempest. In spite of his firmness of soul, the missionary could not help shuddering as he reflected on the

fate of the orphans, the death of Jacques Rennepont, and the fearful devices by which M. Hardy, retired to the cloistered solitude of St. Herem, had become a member of the Society of Jesus, almost in dying. The missionary said to himself that already four members of the Rennepont family—his family—had been successively struck down by some dreadful fate; and he asked himself with alarm, how it was that the detestable interests of the Society of Loyola should be served by a providential fatality? The astonishment of the young missionary would have given place to the deepest horror, could he have known the part that Rodin and his accomplices had taken, both in the death of Jacques Rennepont, by exciting, through Morok, the evil propensities of the artisan, and in the approaching end of Rose and Blanche, by converting, through the Princess de Saint-Dizier, the generous inspirations of the orphans into suicidal heroism.

Roused for a moment from the painful stupor in which they had been plunged, Rose and Blanche half-opened their large eyes, already dull and faded. Then, more and more bewildered, they both gazed fixedly at the angelic countenance of Gabriel.

"Sister," said Rose, in a faint voice, "do

you see the archangel—as in our dreams, in Germany?"

"Yes—three days ago—he appeared to us."

"He is come to fetch us."

"Alas! will our death save our poor mother from purgatory?"

"Angel! blessed angel! pray for our mother—and for us!" Until now, stupefied with amazement and sorrow, almost suffocated with sobs, Gabriel had not been able to utter a word. But at these words of the orphans, he exclaimed:

"Dear children, why doubt of your mother's salvation? Oh! never did a purer soul ascend to its Creator. Your mother? I know from my adopted father that her virtues and courage were the admiration of all who knew her. Oh! believe me; God has blessed her."

"Do you hear, sister?" cried Rose, as a ray of celestial joy illumined for an instant the livid faces of the orphans. "God has blessed our mother."

"Yes, yes," resumed Gabriel; "banish these gloomy ideas. Take courage, poor children! You must not die. Think of your father."

"Our father?" said Blanche, shuddering; and she continued, with a mixture of

reason and wild excitement, which would have touched the soul of the most indifferent: "Alas! he will not find us on his return. Forgive us, father! we did not think to do any harm. We wished, like you, to do something generous—to help our governess—"

"And we did not think to die so quickly, and so soon. Yesterday we were gay and happy."

"Oh, good angel! you will appear to our father, even as you have appeared to us. You will tell him, that, in dying—the last thought of his children—was of him."

"We came here, without Dagobert's knowing it—do not let our father scold him."

"Blessed angel!" resumed the other sister, in a still more feeble voice; "appear to Dagobert also. Tell him that we ask his forgiveness, for the grief our death will occasion him."

"And let our old friend caress our poor Spoilsport for us—our faithful guardian," added Blanche, trying to smile.

"And then," resumed Rose, in a voice that was growing still fainter, "promise to appear to two other persons that have been so kind to us—good Mother Bunch—and the beautiful Lady Adrienne."

"We forget none whom we have loved," said Blanche, with a last effort. "Now, God grant we may go to our mother, never to leave her more!"

"You promised it, good angel — you know you did—in the dream. You said to us: 'Poor children—come from so far —you will have traversed the earth—to rest on the maternal bosom!'"

"Oh! it is dreadful — dreadful! So young—and no hope!" murmured Gabriel, as he buried his face in his hands. "Almighty Father. Thy views are impenetrable. Alas! yet why should these children die this cruel death?"

Rose heaved a deep sigh, and said in an expiring tone:

"Let us be buried together! united in life, in death not divided—"

And the two turned their dying looks upon Gabriel, and stretched out toward him their supplicating hands.

"Oh, blessed martyrs to a generous devotion!" cried the missionary, raising to Heaven his eyes streaming with tears. "Angelic souls! treasures of innocence and truth! ascend, ascend to Heaven—since God calls you to Him, and the earth is not worthy to possess you!"

"Sister! father!" were the last words

that the orphans pronounced with their dying voices.

And then the twins, by a last instinctive impulse, endeavored to clasp each other, and their eyes half opened to exchange yet another glance. They shuddered twice or thrice, their limbs stiffened, a deep sigh struggled from their violet-colored lips. Rose and Blanche were both dead! Gabriel and Sister Martha, after closing the eyes of the orphans, knelt down to pray by the side of the funereal couch. Suddenly a great tumult was heard in the room. Rapid footsteps, mingled with imprecations, sounded close at hand, the curtain was drawn aside from this mournful scene, and Dagobert entered precipitately, pale, haggard, his dress in disorder. At sight of Gabriel and the Sister of Charity kneeling beside the corpses of his children, the soldier uttered a terrible roar, and tried to advance—but in vain—for, before Gabriel could reach him, Dagobert fell flat on the ground, and his gray head struck violently on the floor.

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It is night—a dark and stormy night. One o'clock in the morning has just sounded from the church of Montmartre. It is to the cemetery of Montmartre that

is carried the coffin which, according to the last wishes of Rose and Blanche, contains them both. Through the thick shadow, which rests upon that field of death, may be seen moving a pale light. It is the gravedigger. He advances with caution; a dark lantern is in his hand. A man wrapped in a cloak accompanies him. He holds down his head and weeps. It is Samuel. The old Jew—the keeper of the house in the Rue Saint-Francois. On the night of the funeral of Jacques Rennepont, the first who died of the seven heirs, and who was buried in another cemetery, Samuel had a similar mysterious interview with the gravedigger, to obtain a favor at the price of gold. A strange and awful favor! After passing down several paths, bordered with cypress trees, by the side of many tombs, the Jew and the gravedigger arrived at a little glade, situated near the western wall of the cemetery. The night was so dark that scarcely anything could be seen. After moving his lantern up and down and all about, the gravedigger showed Samuel, at the foot of a tall yew-tree, with long black branches, a little mound of newly-raised earth, and said: "It is here."

"You are sure of it?"

"Yes, yes—two bodies in one coffin! it is not such a common thing."

"Alas! two in the same coffin!" said the Jew, with a deep sigh. "Now that you know the place, what do you want more?" asked the gravedigger.

Samuel did not answer. He fell on his knees, and piously kissed the little mound. Then rising, with his cheeks bathed in tears, he approached the gravedigger, and spoke to him for some moments in a whisper—though they were alone, and in the center of that deserted place. Then began between those two men a mysterious dialogue, which the night enveloped in shade and silence. The gravedigger, alarmed at what Samuel asked him, at first refused his request.

But the Jew, employing persuasions, entreaties, tears, and at last the seduction of the jingling gold, succeeded in conquering the scruples of the gravedigger. Though the latter trembled at the thought of what he promised, he said to Samuel in an agitated tone: "To-morrow night then, at two o'clock."

"I shall be behind the wall," answered Samuel, pointing out the place with the aid of the lantern. "I will throw three stones into the cemetery, for a signal."

"Yes, three stones—as a signal," replied the gravedigger shuddering, and wiping the cold sweat from his forehead.

With considerable remains of vigor, notwithstanding his great age, Samuel availed himself of the broken surface of the low wall, and climbing over it, soon disappeared. The gravedigger returned home with hasty strides. From time to time he looked fearfully behind him, as though he had been pursued by some fatal vision.

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On the evening after the funeral of Rose and Blanche, Rodin wrote two letters. The first, addressed to his mysterious correspondent at Rome, alluded to the deaths of Jacques Rennepont, and Rose and Blanche Simon, as well as to the cession of M. Hardy's property, and the donation of Gabriel — events which reduced the claimants of the inheritance to two—Mdlle. de Cardoville and Djalma. This first note, written by Rodin for Rome, contained only the following words: "Five from seven leaves two. Announce this result to the Cardinal-Prince. Let him go on. I advance—advance—advance!" The second note, in a feigned hand, was addressed to Marshal Simon, to be delivered by a sure messenger, and contained these few lines:

"If there is yet time, make haste to return. Your daughters are both dead. You shall learn who killed them."

CHAPTER LVIII.

RUIN.

It is the day after the death of Marshal Simon's daughters. Mdlle. de Cardoville is yet ignorant of the sad end of her young relatives. Her countenance is radiant with happiness, and never has she looked more beautiful; her eye has never been more brilliant, her complexion more dazzlingly white, her lip of a richer coral. According to her somewhat eccentric custom of dressing herself in her own house in a picturesque style, Adrienne wears to-day, though it is about three o'clock in the afternoon, a pale green watered silk dress, with a very full skirt, the sleeves and bodice slashed with rose-colored ribbon, and adorned with white bugle-beads of exquisite workmanship; while a slender net-work, also of white bugle-beads, concealing the thick plait of Adrienne's back-hair, forms an Oriental headdress of charming originality, and contrasts agreeably with the long curls which fall in front almost to the swell of the bosom. To the expression of indescrib-

able happiness which marks the features of Mddle. de Cardoville, is added a certain resolute, cutting, satirical air, which is not habitual to her. Her charming head, and graceful, swan-like neck, are raised in an attitude of defiance; her small, rose-colored nostrils seem to dilate with ill-repressed ardor, and she waits with haughty impatience for the moment of an aggressive and ironical interview. Not far from Adrienne is Mother Bunch. She has resumed in the house the place which she at first occupied. The young seamstress is in mourning for her sister, but her countenance is expressive of a mild, calm sorrow. She looks at Mdlle. de Cardoville with surprise; for never, till now, has she seen the features of the fair patrician impressed with such a character of ironical audacity. Mdlle. de Cardoville was exempt from the slightest coquetry, in the narrow and ordinary sense of the word. Yet she now cast an inquiring look at the glass before which she was standing, and, having restored the elastic smoothness to one of her long, golden curls, by rolling it for a moment round her ivory finger, she carefully effaced with her hands some almost imperceptible folds, which had formed themselves in the thick material of her elegant corsage. This

movement, and that of turning her back to the glass, to see if her dress sat perfectly on all points, revealed, in serpentine undulations, all the charms and graces of her light and elegant figure; for, in spite of the rich fullness of her shoulders, white and firm as sculptured alabaster, Adrienne belonged to that class of privileged persons who are able at need to make a girdle out of a garter.

Having performed, with indescribable grace, these charming evolutions of feminine coquetry, Adrienne turned toward Mother Bunch, whose surprise was still on the increase, and said to her, smiling: "My dear Magdalen, do not laugh at my question—but what would you say to a picture that should represent me as I am now?"

"Why, lady—"

"There you are again, with your lady-ing," said Adrienne, in a tone of gentle reproach.

"Well, then, Adrienne," resumed Mother Bunch, "I think it would be a charming picture, for you are dressed, as usual, with perfect taste."

"But am I not better dressed than on other days, my dear poetess? I began by telling you that I do not ask the question for my own sake," said Adrienne, gayly.

"Well, I suppose so," replied Mother Bunch, with a faint smile. "It is certainly impossibe to imagine anything that would suit you better. The light green and the pale rose-color, with the soft luster of the white ornaments, harmonize so well with your golden hair that I cannot conceive, I tell you, a more graceful picture."

The speaker felt what she said, and she was happy to be able to express it, for we know the intense admiration of that poetic soul for all that was beautiful.

"Well!" went on Adrienne, gayly, "I am glad, my dear, that you find me better dressed than usual."

"Only," said the hunchback, hesitating.

"Only?" repeated Adrienne, looking at her with an air of interrogation.

"Why, only," continued the other; "if I have never seen you look more pretty, I have also never observed in your features the resolute and ironical expression which they had just now. It was like an air of impatient defiance."

"And so it was, my dear little Magdalen," said Adrienne, throwing her arms round the girl's neck with joyous tenderness. "I must kiss you for having guessed it. You see, I expect a visit from my dear aunt."

"The Princess de Sanit-Dizier?" cried Mother Bunch, in alarm. "That wicked lady who did you so much evil?"

"The very same. She has asked for an interview, and I shall be delighted to receive her."

"Delighted?"

"Yes; a somewhat ironical and malicious delight, it is true," answered Adrienne, still more gayly. "You shall judge for yourself. She regrets her gallantries, her beauty, her youth—even her size afflicts the holy woman!—and she will see me young, fair, beloved—and above all thin—yes, thin," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, laughing merrily. "And you may imagine, my dear, how much envy and despair, the sight of a young, thin woman excites in a stout one of a certain age."

"My friend," said Mother Bunch, gravely, "you speak in jest. And yet, I know not why, the coming of this princess alarms me."

"Dear, gentle soul, be satisfied!" answered Adrienne, affectionately. "I do not fear this woman—I no longer have any fear of her—and, to prove it to her confusion, I will treat her—a monster of hypocrisy and wickedness, who comes here, no doubt, on some abominable de-

sign—I will treat her as an inoffensive, ridiculous fat woman!" And Adrienne again laughed.

A servant here entered the room, and interrupted the mirth of Adrienne, by saying: "The Princess de Saint-Dizier wishes to know if you can receive her?"

"Certainly," said Mdlle. de Cardoville; and the servant retired. Mother Bunch was about to rise and quit the room; but Adrienne held her back, and said to her, taking her hand, with an air of serious tenderness: "Stay, my dear friend, I entreat you."

"Do you wish it?"

"Yes; I wish—still in revenge, you know," said Adrienne, with a smile, "to prove to her highness of Saint-Dizier that I have an affectionate friend—that I have, in fact, every happiness."

"But, Adrienne," replied the other, timidly, "consider—"

"Silence! here is the princess. Remain! I ask it as a favor. The instinct of your heart will discover any snare she may have laid. Did not your affection warn me of the plots of Rodin?"

Mother Bunch could not refuse such a request. She remained, but was about to draw back from the fireplace. Adrienne,

however, took her by the hand, and made her resume her seat in the arm-chair, saying: "My dear Magdalen, keep your place. You owe nothing to the lady. With me it is different; she comes to my house."

Hardly had Adrienne uttered these words than the princess entered, with head erect, and haughty air (we have said she could carry herself most loftily), and advanced with a firm step. The strongest minds have their side of puerile weakness; a savage envy, excited by the elegance, wit, and beauty of Adrienne, bore a large part in the hatred of the princess for her niece; and though it was idle to think of eclipsing Adrienne, and the Princess de Saint-Dizier did not seriously mean to attempt it, she could not forbear, in preparing for the interview she had demanded, taking more pains even than usual in the arrangement of her dress. Beneath her robe of shot silk, she was laced in and tightened to excess—a pressure which considerably increased the color in her cheeks. The throng of jealous and hateful sentiments, which inspired her with regard to Adrienne, had so troubled the clearness of her ordinarily calm judgment, that, instead of the plain and quiet style, in which, as a woman of tact and taste,

she was generally attired, she now committed the folly of wearing a dress of changing hues, and a crimson hat, adorned with a magnificent bird of paradise. Hate, envy, the pride of triumph—for she thought of the skillful perfidy with which she had sent to almost certain death the daughters of Marshal Simon—and the execrable hope of succeeding in new plots, were all expressed in the countenance of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, as she entered her niece's apartment.

Without advancing to meet her aunt, Adrienne rose politely from the sofa on which she was seated, made a half-courtesy, full of grace and dignity, and immediately resumed her former posture. Then, pointing to an arm-chair near the fireplace, at one corner of which sat Mother Bunch, and she herself at the other, she said: "Pray sit down, your highness." The princess turned very red, remained standing, and cast a disdainful glance of insolent surprise at the seamstress, who, in compliance with Adrienne's wish, only bowed slightly at the entrance of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, without offering to give up her place. In acting thus, the young seamstress followed the dictates of her conscience, which told her that the

real superiority did not belong to this base, hypocritical, and wicked princess, but rather to such a person as herself, the admirable and devoted friend.

"Let me beg your highness to sit down," resumed Adrienne, in a mild tone, as she pointed to the vacant chair.

"The interview I have demanded, niece," said the princess, "must be a private one."

"I have no secrets, madame, from my best friend; you may speak in the presence of this young lady."

"I have long known," replied Madame de Saint-Dizier, with bitter irony, "that in all things you care little for secrecy, and that you are easy in the choice of what you call your friends. But you will permit me to act differently from you. If you have no secrets, madame, I have—and I do not choose to confide them to the first comer."

So saying, the pious lady glanced contemptuously at the seamstress. The latter, hurt at the insolent tone of the princess, answered mildly and simply:

"I do not see what can be the great difference between the first and the last comer to Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"What! can it speak?" asked the princess, insolently.

THE PROMENADE OF THE JESUITS.
—The Wandering Jew. Vol. 5, p. 384.

"It can at least answer, madame," replied Mother Bunch, in her calm voice.

"I wish to see you alone, niece—is that clear?" said the princess, impatiently, to her niece.

"I beg your pardon, but I do not quite understand your highness," said Adrienne, with an air of surprise. "This young lady, who honors me with her friendship, is willing to be present at this interview, which you have asked for—I say she has consented to be present, for it needs, I confess, the kindest condescension in her to resign herself, from affection for me, to hear all the graceful, obliging, and charming things which you have no doubt come hither to communicate."

"Madame—" began the princess angrily.

"Permit me to interrupt your highness," returned Adrienne, in a tone of perfect amenity, as if she were addressing the most flattering compliments to her visitor. "To put you quite at your ease with the lady here, I will begin by informing you that she is quite aware of all the holy perfidies, pious wrongs, and devout infamies, of which you nearly made me the victim. She knows that you are a mother of the Church, such as one sees but few of in these days. May I hope, therefore, that

your highness will dispense with this delicate and interesting reserve?"

"Really," said the princess, with a sort of incensed amazement, "I scarcely know if I wake or sleep."

"Dear me!" said Adrienne, in apparent alarm; "this doubt as to the state of your faculties is very shocking, madame. I see that the blood flies to your head, for your face sufficiently shows it; you seem oppressed, confined, uncomfortable—perhaps (we women may say so between ourselves), perhaps you are laced a little too tightly, madame?"

These words, pronounced by Adrienne with an air of warm interest and perfect simplicity, almost choked the princess with rage. She became crimson, seated herself abruptly, and exclaimed: "Be it so, madame! I prefer this reception to any other. It puts me at my ease, as you say."

"Does it indeed, madame?" said Adrienne, with a smile. "You may now at least speak frankly all that you feel, which must for you have the charm of novelty? Confess that you are obliged to me for enabling you, even for a moment, to lay aside that mask of piety, amiability, and goodness, which must be so troublesome to you."

As she listened to the sarcasms of Adrienne (an innocent and excusable revenge, if we consider all the wrongs she had suffered) Mother Bunch felt her heart sink within her; for she dreaded the malignity of the princess, who replied, with the utmost calmness: "A thousand thanks, madame, for your excellent intentions and sentiments. I appreciate them as I ought, and I hope in a short time to prove it to you."

"Well, madame," said Adrienne, playfully, "let us have it all at once. I am full of impatient curiosity."

"And yet," said the princess, feigning in her turn a bitter and ironical delight, "you are far from having the least notion of what I am about to announce to you."

"Indeed! I fear that your highness's candor and modesty deceive you," replied Adrienne, with the same mocking affability; "for there are very few things on your part that can surprise me, madame. You must be aware that from your highness I am prepared for anything."

"Perhaps, madame," said the princess, laying great stress on her words, "if, for instance, I were to tell you that within twenty-four hours—suppose between this

and to-morrow—you will be reduced to poverty—"

This was so unexpected that Mdlle. de Cardoville started in spite of herself, and Mother Bunch shuddered.

"Ah, madame!" said the princess, with triumphant joy and cruel mildness, as she watched the growing surprise of her niece, "confess that I have astonished you a little. You were right in giving to our interview the turn it has taken. I should have needed all sorts of circumlocution to say to you, 'Niece, to-morrow you will be as poor as you are rich to-day.' But now I can tell you the fact quite plainly and simply."

Recovering from her first amazement, Adrienne replied, with a calm smile, which checked the joy of the princess: "Well, I confess frankly, madame, that you have surprised me; I expected from you one of those black pieces of malignity, one of those well-laid plots, in which you are known to excel, and I did not think you would make all this fuss about such a trifle."

"To be ruined — completely ruined," cried the princess, "and that by to-morrow —you that have been so prodigal, will see your house, furniture, horses, jewels, even the ridiculous dresses of which you are so vain, all taken from you—do you call that

a trifle? You, that spend with indifference thousands of louis, will be reduced to a pension inferior to the wages you give your foot-boy—do you call that a trifle?"

To her aunt's cruel disappointment, Adrienne, who appeared quite to have recovered her serenity, was about to answer accordingly, when the door suddenly opened, and, without being announced, Prince Djalma entered the room. A proud and tender expression of delight beamed from the radiant brow of Adrienne at sight of the prince, and it is impossible to describe the look of triumphant happiness and high disdain that she cast upon the Princess de Saint-Dizier. Djalma himself had never looked more handsome, and never had more intense happiness been impressed on a human countenance. The Hindoo wore a long robe of white cashmere, adorned with innumerable stripes of gold and purple; his turban was of the same color and material; a magnificent figured shawl was twisted about his waist. On seeing the Indian, whom she had not hoped to meet at Mdlle. de Cardoville's, the Princess de Saint-Dizier could not at first conceal her extreme surprise. It was between these four, then, that the following scene took place.

CHAPTER LIX.

MEMORIES.

DJALMA, having never before met the Princess de Saint-Dizier at Adrienne's, at first appeared rather astonished at her presence. The princess, keeping silence for a moment, contemplated with implacable hatred and envy those two beings, both so fair and young, so loving and happy. Suddenly she started, as if she had just remembered something of great importance, and for some seconds she remained absorbed in thought.

Adrienne and Djalma availed themselves of this interval to gaze fondly on each other, with a sort of ardent idolatry, which filled their eyes with sweet tears. Then, at a movement of the Princess de Saint-Dizer, who seemed to rouse herself from her momentary trance, Mdlle. de Cardoville said to the young prince, with a smile: "My dear cousin, I have to repair an omission (voluntary, I confess, and for good reasons), in never having before mentioned to you one of my relations, whom I have now the honor to present to you. The Princess de Saint-Dizier!"

Djalma bowed; but Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed, just as her aunt was about to make some reply: "Her Highness of Saint-Dizier came very kindly to inform me of an event which is a most fortunate one for me, and of which I will speak to you hereafter, cousin — unless this amiable lady should wish to deprive me of the pleasure of making such a communication."

The unexpected arrival of the prince, and the recollections which had suddenly occurred to the princess, had no doubt greatly modified her first plans; for, instead of continuing the conversation with regard to Adrienne's threatened loss of fortune, the princess answered, with a bland smile, that covered an odious meaning: "I should be sorry, prince, to deprive my dear and amiable niece of the pleasure of announcing to you the happy news to which she alludes, and which, as a near relative, I lost no time in communicating to her. I have here some notes on this subject," added the princess, delivering a paper to Adrienne, "which I hope will prove, to her entire satisfaction, the reality of what I have announced to her."

"A thousand thanks, my dear aunt," said Adrienne, receiving the paper with perfect indifference; "these precautions

and proofs are quite superfluous. You know that I always believe you on your word, when it concerns your good feeling toward myself."

Notwithstanding his ignorance of the refined perfidy and cruel politeness of civilized life, Djalma, endowed with a tact and fineness of perception common to most natures of extreme susceptibility, felt some degree of mental discomfort as he listened to this exchange of false compliments. He could not guess their full meaning, but they sounded hollow to his ear; and moreover, whether from instinct or presentiment, he had conceived a vague dislike for the Princess de Saint-Dizier. That pious lady, full of the great affair in hand, was a prey to the most violent agitation, which betrayed itself in the growing color of her cheeks, her bitter smile, and the malicious brightness of her glance. As he gazed on this woman, Djalma was unable to conquer his rising antipathy, and he remained silent and attentive, while his handsome countenance lost something of its former serenity. Mother Bunch also felt the influence of a painful impression. She glanced in terror at the princess, and then imploringly at Adrienne as though she entreated the latter to put an end to an inter-

view of which the young seamstress foresaw the fatal consequences. But, unfortunately, the Princess de Saint-Dizier was too much interested in prolonging this conversation; and Mdlle. de Cardoville, gathering new courage and confidence from the presence of the man she adored, took delight in vexing the princess with the exhibition of their happy loves.

After a short silence, the Princess de Saint-Dizier observed, in a soft and insinuating tone: "Really, prince, you cannot think how pleased I was to learn by public report (for people talk of nothing else, and with good reason) of your chivalrous attachment to my dear niece; for, without knowing it, you will extricate me from a difficult position."

Djalma made no answer, but he looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with a surprised and almost sorrowful air, as if to ask what her aunt meant to insinuate.

The latter, not perceiving this mute interrogation, resumed as follows: "I will express myself more clearly, prince. You can understand that, being the nearest relative of this dear, obstinate girl, I am more or less responsible for her conduct in the eyes of the world; and you, prince, seem just to have arrived on purpose, from

the end of the earth, to take charge of a destiny which had caused me considerable apprehension. It is charming, it is excellent; and I know not which most to admire, your courage or your good fortune." The princess threw a glance of diabolical malice at Adrienne, and awaited her answer with an air of defiance.

"Listen to our good aunt, my dear cousin," said the young lady, smiling calmly. "Since our affectionate kinswoman sees you and me united and happy, her heart is swelling with such a flood of joy that it must run over, and the effects will be delightful. Only have a little patience, and you will behold them in their full beauty. I do not know," added Adrienne, in the most natural tone, "why, in thinking of these outpourings of our dear aunt's affection, I should remember what you told me, cousin, of a certain viper in your country, which sometimes, in a powerless bite, breaks its fangs, and, absorbing its own venom, becomes the victim of the poison it distills. Come, my dear aunt, you that have so good and noble a heart, I am sure you must feel interested in the fate of those poor vipers."

The princess darted an implacable look at her niece, and replied, in an agitated

voice, "I do not see the object of this selection of natural history. Do you, prince?"

Djalma made no answer; leaning with his arm on the mantel-piece, he threw dark and piercing glances upon the princess. His involuntary hatred of this woman filled his heart.

"Ah, my dear aunt!" resumed Adrienne, in a tone of self-reproach; "have I presumed too much on the goodness of your heart? Have you not even sympathy for vipers? For whom, then, have you any? After all, I can very well understand it," added Adrienne, as if to herself; "vipers are so thin. But, to lay aside these follies," she continued, gayly, as she saw the ill-repressed rage of the pious woman, "tell us at once, my dear aunt, all the tender things which the sight of our happiness inspires."

"I hope to do so, my amiable niece. First, I must congratulate this dear prince on having come so far to take charge, in all confidence, and with his eyes shut, of you, my poor child, whom we were obliged to confine as mad, in order to give a decent color to your excesses. You remember the handsome lad that we found in your apartment. You cannot be so faithless as already to have forgotten his name? He

was a fine youth, and a poet—one Agricola Baudoin—and was discovered in a secret place, attached to your bed-chamber. All Paris was amused with the scandal—for you are not about to marry an unknown person, dear prince; her name has been in every mouth."

At these unexpected and dreadful words, Adrienne, Djalma, and Mother Bunch, though under the influence of different kinds of resentment, remained for a moment mute with surprise; and the princess, judging it no longer necessary to repress her infernal joy and triumphant hatred, exclaimed, as she rose from her seat, with flushed cheek and flashing eyes, "Yes, I defy you to contradict me. Were we not forced to confine you, on the plea of madness? And did we not find a workman (your lover) concealed in your bedroom?"

On this horrible accusation, Djalma's golden complexion, transparent as amber, became suddenly the color of lead; his eyes, fixed and staring, showed the white round the pupil — his upper lip, red as blood, was curled in a kind of wild convulsion, which exposed to view the firmly-set teeth—and his whole countenance became so frightfully threatening and ferocious that Mother Bunch shuddered with

terror. Carried away by the ardor of his blood, the young Oriental felt a sort of dizzy, unreflecting, involuntary rage—a fiery commotion, like that which makes the blood leap to the brave man's eyes and brain when he feels a blow upon his face. If, during that moment, rapid as the passage of the lightning through the cloud, action could have taken the place of thought, the princess and Adrienne, Mother Bunch and himself, would all have been annihilated by an explosion as sudden and fatal as that of the bursting of a mine. He would have killed the princess, because she accused Adrienne of infamous deception—he would have killed Adrienne, because she could even be suspected of such infamy—and Mother Bunch, for being a witness of the accusation—and himself, in order not to survive such horrid treachery. But, oh, wonder! his furious and bloodshot gaze met the calm look of Adrienne—a look so full of dignity and serene confidence—and the expression of ferocious rage passed away like a flash of lightning.

Much more, to the great surprise of the princess and the young work-girl, as the glances which Djalma cast upon Adrienne went (as it were) deeper into that pure soul,

not only did the Indian grow calm, but, by a kind of transfiguration, his countenance seemed to borrow her serene expression, and reflect, as in a mirror, the noble serenity impressed on the young lady's features. Let us explain physically this moral revolution, as consoling to the terrified work-girl as provoking to the princess. Hardly had the princess distilled the atrocious calumny from her venomous lips than Djalma, then standing up before the fireplace, had, in the first paroxysm of his fury, advanced a step toward her; but, wishing as it were to moderate his rage, he held by the marble chimney-piece, which he grasped with iron strength. A convulsive trembling shook his whole body, and his features, altered and contracted, became almost frightful. Adrienne, on her part, when she heard the accusation, yielding to a first impulse of just indignation, even as Djalma had yielded to one of blind fury, rose abruptly, with offended pride flashing from her eyes; but, almost immediately appeased by the consciousness of her own purity, her charming face resumed its expression of adorable serenity. It was then that her eyes met Djalma's. For a second, the young lady was even more afflicted than terrified at the threat-

ening and formidable expression of the young Indian's countenance. "Can stupid indignity exasperate him to this degree?" said Adrienne to herself. "Does he suspect *me*, then?"

But to this reflection, as rapid as it was painful, succeeded the most lively joy, when the eyes of Adrienne rested for a short time on those of the Indian, and she saw his agitated countenance grow calm as if by magic, and become radiant and beautiful as before. Thus was the abominable plot of the Princess de Saint-Dizier utterly confounded by the sincere and confiding expression of Adrienne's face. That was not all. At the moment, when, as a spectator of this mute and expressive scene (which proved so well the wondrous sympathy of those two beings, who, without speaking a word, had understood and satisfied each other), the princess was choking with rage and vexation—Adrienne, with a charming smile and gesture, extended her fair hand to Djalma, who, kneeling, imprinted on it a kiss of fire, which sent a light blush to the forehead of the young lady.

Then the Hindoo, placing himself on the ermine carpet at the feet of Mdlle. de Cardoville, in an attitude full of grace and

respect, rested his chin on the palm of one of his hands, and gazed on her silently, in a sort of mute adoration—while Adrienne, bending over him with a happy smile, "looked at the babies in his eyes," as the song says, with as much amorous complacency as if the hateful princess had not been present. But soon, as if something were wanting to complete her happiness, Adrienne beckoned to Mother Bunch, and made her sit down by her side. Then, with her hand clasped in that of this excellent friend, Mdlle. de Cardoville smiled on Djalma, stretched adoringly at her feet, and cast on the dismayed princess a look of such calm and fixed serenity, so nobly expressive of the invincible quiet of her happiness, and her lofty disdain of all calumnious attacks, that the Princess de Saint-Dizier, confused and stupefied, murmured some hardly intelligible words, in a voice trembling with passion, and, completely losing her presence of mind, rushed toward the door. But, at this moment, the hunchback, who feared some ambush, some perfidious plot in the background, resolved, after exchanging a glance with Adrienne, to accompany the princess to her carriage.

The angry disappointment of the Prin-

cess de Saint-Dizier, when she saw herself thus followed and watched, appeared so comical to Mdlle. de Cardoville that she could not help laughing aloud; and it was to the sound of contemptuous hilarity that the hypocritical princess, with rage and despair in her heart, quitted the house to which she had hoped to bring trouble and misery. Adrienne and Djalma were left alone. Before relating the scene which took place between them a few retrospective words are indispensable. It will easily be imagined that since Mdlle. de Cardoville and the Oriental had been brought into such close contact, after so many disappointments, their days had passed away like a dream of happiness. Adrienne had especially taken pains to bring to light, one by one, all the generous qualities of Djalma, of which she had read so much in her books of travels. The young lady had imposed on herself this tender and patient study of Djalma's character, not only to justify to her own mind the intensity of her love, but because this period of trial, to which she had assigned a term, enabled her to temper and divert the violence of Djalma's passion—a task the more meritorious, as she herself was of the same ardent temperament. For, in those two

lovers, the finest qualities of sense and soul seemed exactly to balance each other, and Heaven had bestowed on them the rarest beauty of form, and the most adorable excellence of heart, as if to legitimatize the irresistible attraction which drew and bound them together. What, then, was to be the term of this painful trial, which Adrienne had imposed on Djalma and on herself? This is what Mdlle. de Cardoville intended to tell the prince, in the interview she had with him, after the abrupt departure of the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

CHAPTER LX.

THE ORDEAL.

ADRIENNE DE CARDOVILLE and Djalma had remained alone. Such was the noble confidence which had succeeded in the Hindoo's mind to his first movement of unreflecting fury, caused by the infamous calumny, that, once alone with Adrienne, he did not even allude to that shameful accusation. On her side (touching and admirable sympathy of those two hearts!), the young lady was too proud, conscious of the purity of her love, to descend to any justification of herself. She would have considered it an insult both to herself

and him. Therefore, the lovers began their interview as if the princess had never made any such remark. The same contempt was extended to the papers which the princess had brought with her, to prove the imminent ruin to which Adrienne was exposed. The young lady had laid them down, without reading them, on a stand within her reach. She made a graceful sign to Djalma to seat himself by her side, and accordingly he quitted, not without regret, the place he had occupied at her feet.

"My love," said Adrienne, in a grave and tender voice, "you have often impatiently asked me, when would come the term of the trial we have laid upon ourselves. That moment is at hand."

Djalma started, and could not restrain a cry of surprise and joy; but this almost trembling exclamation was so soft and sweet that it seemed rather the expression of ineffable gratitude than of exulting passion.

Adrienne continued: "Separated—surrounded by treachery and fraud—mutually deceived as to each other's sentiments—we yet loved on, and in that followed an irresistible attraction, stronger than every opposing influence. But since then,

in these days of happy retirement from the world, we have learned to value and esteem each other more. Left to ourselves in perfect freedom, we have had the courage to resist every temptation, that hereafter we might be happy without remorse. During these days, in which our hearts have been laid open to each other, we have read them thoroughly. Yes, Djalma! I believe in you, and you in me—I find in you all that you find in me—every possible human security for our future happiness. But this love must yet be consecrated; and in the eyes of the world, in which we are called upon to live, marriage is the only consecration, and marriage enchains one's whole life."

Djalma looked at the young lady with surprise.

"Yes, one's whole life! and yet who can answer for the sentiments of a whole life?" resumed Adrienne. "A God that could see into the future, could alone bind irrevocably certain hearts for their own happiness; but, alas! to human eyes the future is impenetrable. Therefore, to accept indissoluble ties, for any longer than one can answer for a present sentiment, is to commit an act of selfish and impious folly."

Djalma made no reply, but, with an

almost respectful gesture, he urged the speaker to continue.

"And then," proceeded she, with a mixture of tenderness and pride, "from respect for your dignity and mine, I would never promise to keep a law made by man against woman, with contemptuous and brutal egotism—a law, which denies to woman soul, mind, and heart—a law, which none can accept, without being either a slave or perjured—a law, which takes from the girl her name, reduces the wife to a state of degrading inferiority, denies to the mother all rights over her own children, and enslaves one human creature to the will of another, who is in all respects her equal in the sight of God! —You know, my love," added the young lady, with passionate enthusiam, "how much I honor you, whose father was called the Father of the Generous. I do not then fear, noble and valiant heart, to see you use against me these tyrannical powers, but, throughout my life, I never uttered a falsehood, and our love is too sacred and celestial to be purchased by a double perjury. No, never will I swear to observe a law that my dignity and my reason refuse to sanction. If, to-morrow, the freedom of divorce were established,

and the rights of women recognized, I should be willing to observe usages which would then be in accordance with my conscience, and with what is just, possible, and humane." Then, after a pause, Adrienne continued with such deep and sweet emotion that a tear of tenderness veiled her beauteous eyes: "Oh! if you knew, my love, what your love is to me: if you knew how dear and sacred I hold your happiness—you would excuse, you would understand, these generous superstitions of a loving and honest heart, which could only see a fatal omen in forms degraded by falsehood and perjury. What I wish is, to attach you by love, to bind you in chains of happiness—and to leave you free, that I may owe your constancy only to your affection."

Djalma had listened to the young girl with passionate attention. Proud and generous himself, he admired this proud and generous character. After a moment's meditative silence, he answered, in his sweet, sonorous voice, in an almost solemn tone: "Like you, I hold in detestation falsehood and perjury. Like you, I think that man degrades himself, by accepting the right of being a cowardly tyrant, even though resolved never to use

the power. Like you, I could not bear the thought that I owed all I most valued, not to your love alone, but to the eternal constraint of an indissoluble bond. Like you, I believe there is no dignity but in freedom. But you have said, that, for this great and holy love, you demand a religious consecration; and if you reject vows that you cannot make without folly and perjury, are there then others, which your reason and your heart approve?—Who will pronounce the required blessing? To whom must these vows be spoken?"

"In a few days, my love, I believe I shall be able to tell you all. Every evening, after your departure, I have no other thought. I wish to find the means of uniting yourself and me—in the eyes of God, not of the law—without offending the habits and prejudices of a world, in which it may suit us hereafter to live. Yes, my friend! when you know whose are the noble hands that are to join ours together—who is to bless and glorify God in our union—a sacred union, that will leave us worthy and free—you will say, I am sure, that never purer hands could have been laid upon us. Forgive me, friend! all this is in earnest!—yes, earnest as our love, earnest as our happiness. If

my words seem to you strange, my thoughts unreasonable, tell it me, love! We will seek and find some better means to reconcile that we owe to Heaven with what we owe to the world and to ourselves. It is said that lovers are beside themselves," added the young lady, with a smile, "but I think that no creatures are more reasonable."

"When I hear you speak thus of our happiness," said Djalma, deeply moved, "with so much calm and earnest tenderness, I think I see a mother occupied with the future prospects of her darling child—trying to surround him with all that can make him strong, valiant, and generous—trying to remove far from him all that is ignoble and unworthy. You ask me to tell you if your thoughts seem strange to me, Adrienne. You forget, that what makes my faith in our love is my feeling exactly as you do. What offends you offends me also; what disgusts you disgusts me. Just now, when you cited to me the laws of this country, which respect in a woman not even a mother's right—I thought with pride of our barbarous countries, where woman, though a slave, is made free when she becomes a mother. No, no; such laws are not made either for you or me. Is it

not to prove your sacred respect for our love, to wish to raise it above the shameful servitude that would degrade you? You see, Adrienne, I have often heard it said by the priests of my country that there were beings inferior to the gods, but superior to every other creature. I did not believe those priests; but now I do." These last words were uttered, not in the tone of flattery, but with an accent of sincere conviction, and with that sort of passionate veneration and almost timid fervor which mark the believer talking of his faith; but what is impossible to describe, is the ineffable harmony of these almost religious words, with the mild, deep tone of the young Oriental's voice—as well as the ardent expression of amorous melancholy, which gave an irresistible charm to his enchanting features.

Adrienne had listened to Djalma with an indescribable mixture of joy, gratitude, and pride. Laying her hand on her bosom, as if to keep down its violent pulsations, she resumed, as she looked at the prince with delight: "Behold him, ever the same! —just, good, great!—Oh, my heart! my heart! how proudly it beats. Blessed be God, who created me for this adored lover! He must mean to astonish the world, by

the prodigies of tenderness and charity that such a love may produce. They do not yet know the sovereign might of free, happy, ardent love. Yes, Djalma! on the day when our hands are joined together, what hymns of gratitude will ascend to Heaven!—Ah! they do not know the immense, the insatiable longing for joy and delight, which possesses two hearts like ours; they do not know what rays of happiness stream from the celestial halo of such a flame!—Oh, yes! I feel it. Many tears will be dried, many cold hearts warmed, at the divine fire of our love. And it will be by the benedictions of those we serve that they will learn the intoxication of our rapture!"

To the dazzled eyes of Djalma, Adrienne appeared more and more an ideal being—partaking of the Divinity by her goodness, of the animal nature by passion—for, yielding to the intensity of excitement, Adrienne fixed upon Djalma looks that sparkled with love.

Then, almost beside himself, the Asiatic fell prostrate at the feet of the maiden, and exclaimed, in a supplicating voice: "Mercy, my courage fails me. Have pity on me! do not talk thus. Oh, that day! what years of my life would I not give to hasten it!"

"Silence! no blasphemy. Do not your years belong to me?"

"Adrienne! you love me!"

The young lady did not answer; but her half-veiled, burning glance dealt the last blow to Djalma's reason. Seizing her hands in his own, he exclaimed, with a tremulous voice: "That day, in which we shall mount to Heaven, in which we shall be gods in happiness—why postpone it any longer?"

"Because our love must be consecrated by the benediction of Heaven."

"Are we not free?"

"Yes, yes, my love; we are free. Let us be worthy of our liberty!"

"Adrienne! mercy!"

"I ask you also to have mercy—to have mercy on the sacredness of our love. Do not profane it in its very flower. Believe my heart! believe my presentiments! to profane it would be to kill. Courage, my adored lover! a few days longer—and then happiness—without regret, and without remorse!"

"And, until then, hell! tortures without a name! You do not, cannot know what I suffer when I leave your presence. Your image follows me, your breath burns me up; I cannot sleep, but call on you every

night with sighs and tears—just as I called on you when I thought you did not love me—and yet I know you love me. I know you are mine. But to see you every day more beautiful, more adored—and every day to quit you more impassioned—oh! you cannot tell—"

Djalma was unable to proceed. What he said of his devouring tortures, Adrienne had felt, perhaps even more intensely. Electrified by the passionate words of Djalma, so beautiful in his excitement, her courage failed, and she perceived that an irresistible languor was creeping over her. By a last chaste effort of the will, she rose abruptly, and hastening to the door, which communicated with Mother Bunch's chamber, she exclaimed: "My sister! help me!"

In another moment, Mdlle. de Cardoville, her face bathed in tears, clasped the young seamstress in her arms; while Djalma knelt respectfully on the threshold he did not dare to pass.

CHAPTER LXI.

AMBITION.

A FEW days after the interview of Djalma and Adrienne just described, Rodin

was alone in his bed-chamber, in the house in the Rue de Vaugirard, walking up and down the room where he had so valiantly undergone the moxas of Dr. Baleinier. With his hands thrust into the hind pockets of his greatcoat, and his head bowed upon his breast, the Jesuit seemed to be reflecting profoundly, and his varying walk, now slow, now quick, betrayed the agitation of his mind.

"On the side of Rome," said Rodin to himself, "I am tranquil. All is going well. The abdication is as good as settled, and if I can pay them the price agreed, the Prince-Cardinal can secure me a majority of nine voices in the conclave. Our General is with me; the doubts of Cardinal Malipieri are at an end, or have found no echo. Yet I am not quite easy with regard to the reported correspondence between Father d'Aigrigny and Malipieri. I have not been able to intercept any of it. No matter; that soldier's business is settled. A little patience and he will be wiped out."

Here the pale lips were contracted by one of those frightful smiles which gave to Rodin's countenance so diabolical an expression.

After a pause, he resumed: "The funeral

of the freethinker, the philanthropist, the workman's friend, took place yesterday at St. Herem. Francis Hardy went off in a fit of ecstatic delirium. I had his donation, it is true; but this is more certain. Everything may be disputed in this world; the dead dispute nothing."

Rodin remained in thought for some moments; then he added, in a grave tone: "There remain this red-haired wench and her mulatto. This is the twenty-seventh of May; the first of June approaches and these turtle-doves still seem invulnerable. The princess thought she had hit upon a good plan, and I should have thought so too. It was a good idea to mention the discovery of Agricola Baudoin in the madcap's room, for it made the Indian tiger roar with savage jealousy. Yes; but then the dove began to coo, and hold out her pretty beak, and the foolish tiger sheathed his claws, and rolled on the ground before her. It's a pity, for there was some sense in the scheme."

The walk of Rodin became more and more agitated. "Nothing is more extraordinary," continued he, "than the generative succession of ideas. In comparing this red-haired jade to a dove (*colombe*), I could not help thinking of

that infamous old woman, Sainte-Colombe, whom that big rascal Jacques Dumoulin pays his court to, and whom the Abbe Corbinet will finish, I hope, by turning to good account. I have often remarked, that, as a poet may find an excellent rhyme by mere chance, so the germ of the best ideas is sometimes found in a word, or in some absurd resemblance like the present. That abominable hag, Sainte-Colombe, and the pretty Adrienne de Cardoville, go as well together, as a ring would suit a cat, or a necklace a fish. Well, there is nothing in it."

Hardly had Rodin pronounced these words than he started suddenly, and his face shone with a fatal joy. Then it assumed an expression of meditative astonishment, as happens when chance reveals some unexpected discovery to the surprised and charmed inquirer after knowledge.

Soon, with raised head and sparkling eye, his hollow cheeks swelling with joy and pride, Rodin folded his arms in triumph on his breast, and exclaimed: "Oh! how admirable and marvelous are these mysterious evolutions of the mind; how incomprehensible is the chain of human thought, which, starting from an absurd jingle of words, arrives at a splendid or

luminous idea! Is it weakness? or is it strength? Strange — very strange! I compare the red-haired girl to a dove —a colombe. That makes me think of the hag who traded in the bodies and souls of so many creatures. Vulgar proverbs occur to me, about a ring and a cat, a fish and a necklace—and suddenly at the word NECKLACE, a new light dawns upon me. Yes: that one word NECKLACE shall be to me a golden key, to open the portals of my brain, so long foolishly closed."

And, after again walking hastily up and down, Rodin continued: "Yes, it is worth attempting. The more I reflect upon it the more feasible it appears. Only how to get at that wretch, Sainte-Colombe? Well, there is Jacques Dumoulin, and the other —where to find her? That is the stumbling-block. I must not shout before I am out of the wood."

Rodin began again to walk, biting his nails with an air of deep thought. For some moments, such was the tension of his mind, large drops of sweat stood on his yellow brow. He walked up and down, stopped, stamped with his foot, now raised his eyes as if in search of an inspiration, and now scratched his head violently with his left hand, while he continued to gnaw

the nails of the right. Finally, from time to time, he uttered exclamations of rage, despondency, or hope, as by turns they took possession of his mind. If the cause of this monster's agitation had not been horrible, it would have been a curious and interesting spectacle to watch the labors of that powerful brain—to follow, as it were, on that shifting countenance, the progress and development of the project, on which he was now concentrating all the resources of his strong intellect. At length, the work appeared to be near completion, for Rodin resumed: "Yes, yes! it is bold, hazardous—but then it is prompt, and the consequences may be incalculable. Who can foresee the effects of the explosion of a mine?"

Then, yielding to a movement of enthusiasm, which was hardly natural to him, the Jesuit exclaimed, with rapture: "Oh, the passions! the passions! what a magical instrument do they form, if you do but touch the keys with a light, skillful, and vigorous hand! How beautiful too is the power of thought! Talk of the acorn that becomes an oak, the seed that grows up to the corn—the seed takes months, the acorn centuries, to unfold its splendors—but here is a little word in eight letters, necklace—and this word, falling into my brain but

a few minutes ago, has grown and grown till it has become larger than any oak. Yes, that word is the germ of an idea, that, like the oak, lifts itself up toward Heaven, for the greater glory of the Lord —such as they called Him, and such as I would assert Him to be, should I attain—and I shall attain—for these miserable Renneponts will pass away like a shadow. And what matters it, after all; to the moral order I am reserved to guide, whether these people live or die? What do such lives weigh in the balance of the great destinies of the world? while this inheritance which I shall boldly fling into the scale, will lift me to a sphere, from which one commands many kings, many nations —let them say and make what noise they will. The idiots—the stupid idiots! or rather, the kind, blessed, adorable idiots! They think they have crushed us, when they say to us men of the Church: 'You take the spiritual, but we will keep the temporal!' Oh, their conscience or their modesty inspires them well, when it bids them not meddle with spiritual things! They abandon the spiritual! they despise it, they will have nothing to do with it—oh, the venerable asses! they do not see, that, even as they go straight to the mill,

it is by the spiritual that we go straight to the temporal. As if the mind did not govern the body! They leave us the spiritual—that is, command of the conscience, soul, heart, and judgment—the spiritual — that is, the distribution of heaven's rewards, and punishments, and pardons—without check, without control, in the secrecy of the confessional—and that dolt, the temporal, has nothing but brute matter for his portion, and yet rubs his paunch for joy. Only, from time to time he perceives, too late, that, if he has the body, we have the soul, and that the soul governs the body, and so the body ends by coming with us also—to the great surprise of Master Temporal, who stands staring with his hands on his paunch, and says: 'Dear me! is it possible?' "

Then, with a laugh of savage contempt, Rodin began to walk with great strides, and thus continued: "Oh! let me reach it —let me but reach the place of Sixtus V. —and the world shall see (one day, when it awakes) what it is to have the spiritual power in hands like mine—in the hands of a priest, who, for fifty years, has lived hardly, frugally, chastely, and who, were he pope, would continue to live hardly, frugally, chastely!"

Rodin became terrible, as he spoke thus. All the sanguinary, sacrilegious, execrable ambition of the worst popes seemed written in fiery characters on the brow of this son of Ignatius. A morbid desire of rule seemed to stir up the Jesuit's impure blood; he was bathed in a burning sweat, and a kind of nauseous vapor spread itself round about him. Suddenly, the noise of a traveling-carriage, which entered the courtyard of the house, attracted his attention. Regretting his momentary excitement, he drew from his pocket his dirty white and red cotton handkerchief, and dipping it in a glass of water, he applied it to his cheeks and temples, while he approached the window, to look through the half open blinds at the traveler who had just arrived. The projection of a portico, over the door at which the carriage had stopped, intercepted Rodin's view.

"No matter," said he, recovering his coolness; "I shall know presently who is there. I must write at once to Jacques Dumoulin, to come hither immediately. He served me well, with regard to that little slut in the Rue Clovis, who made my hair stand on end with her infernal Beranger. This time, Dumoulin may serve

me again. I have him in my clutches, and he will obey me."

Rodin sat down to his desk and wrote. A few seconds later, some one knocked at the door, which was double locked, quite contrary to the rules of the order. But, sure of his own influence and importance, Rodin, who had obtained from the general permission to be rid for a time of the inconvenient company of a *socius*, often took upon himself to break through a number of the rules. A servant entered, and delivered a letter to Rodin. Before opening it, the latter said to the man: "What carriage is that which just arrived?"

"It comes from Rome, father," answered the servant, bowing.

"From Rome!" said Rodin, hastily; and, in spite of himself, a vague uneasiness was expressed in his countenance. But, still holding the letter in his hands, he added:

"Who comes in the carriage?"

"A reverend father of our blessed company." Notwithstanding his ardent curiosity, for he knew that a reverend father, traveling post, is always charged with some important mission, Rodin asked no more questions on the subject, but said, as he pointed to the paper in his hand:

"Whence comes this letter?"

"From our house at St. Herem, father." Rodin looked more attentively at the writing, and recognized the hand of Father d'Aigrigny, who had been commissioned to attend M. Hardy in his last moments. The letter ran as follows:

"I send a dispatch to inform your reverence of a fact which is perhaps more singular than important. After the funeral of M. Francis Hardy, the coffin which contained his remains had been provisionally deposited in a vault beneath our chapel, until it could be removed to the cemetery of the neighboring town. This morning, when our people went down into the vault, to make necessary preparations for the removal of the body—the coffin had disappeared."

"That is strange, indeed," said Rodin with a start. Then he continued to read:

"All search has hitherto been vain to discover the authors of the sacrilegious deed. The chapel being, as you know, at a distance from the house, they were able to effect an entry without disturbing us. We have found traces of a four-wheeled carriage on the damp ground in the neighborhood; but, at some little distance from the chapel these marks are lost in the sand,

and it has been impossible to follow them any further."

"Who can have carried away this body?" said Rodin, with a thoughtful air. "Who could have any interest in doing so?"

He continued to read:

"Luckily, the certificate of death is quite correct. I sent for a doctor from Etampes, to prove the disease, and no question can be raised on that point. The donation is therefore good and valid in every respect, but I think it best to inform your reverence of what has happened, that you may take measures accordingly, etc., etc."

After a moment's reflection, Rodin said to himself: "D'Aigrigny is right in his remark; it is more singular than important. Still, it makes one think. We must have an eye to this affair."

Turning toward the servant who had brought him the letter Rodin gave him the note he had just written to Ninny Moulin, and said to him: "Let this letter be taken instantly to its address, and let the bearer wait for an answer."

"Yes, father." At the moment the servant left the room a reverend father entered, and said to Rodin:

"Father Caboccini of Rome has just ar-

rived, with a mission from our general to your reverence."

At these words, Rodin's blood ran cold, but he maintained his immovable calmness, and said simply: "Where is Father Caboccini?"

"In the next room, father."

"Beg him to walk in, and leave us," said the other.

A second after, Father Caboccini of Rome entered the room, and was left alone with Rodin.

CHAPTER LXII.

TO A SOCIUS, A SOCIUS AND A HALF.

THE Reverend Father Caboccini, the Roman Jesuit who now came to visit Rodin, was a short man of about thirty years of age, plump, in good condition, and with an abdomen that swelled out his black cassock. The good little father was blind of one eye, but his remaining organ of vision sparkled with vivacity. His rosy countenance was gay, smiling, joyous, splendidly crowned with thick chestnut hair, which curled like a wax doll's. His address was cordial to familiarity, and his expansive and petulant manners harmonized well with his general appearance. In

a second, Rodin had taken his measure of the Italian emissary; and as he knew the practice of his company, and the ways of Rome, he felt by no means comfortable at sight of this jolly little father, with such affable manners. He would have less feared some tall, bony priest, with austere and sepulchral countenance, for he knew that the Company loves to deceive by the outward appearance of its agents; and, if Rodin guessed rightly, the cordial address of this personage would rather tend to show that he was charged with some fatal mission.

Suspicious, attentive, with eye and mind on the watch, like an old wolf expecting an attack, Rodin advanced, as usual, slowly and tortuously toward the little man, so as to have time to examine him thoroughly, and penetrate beneath his jovial outside. But the Roman left him no space for that purpose. In his impetuous affection, he threw himself right on the neck of Rodin, pressed him in his arms with an effusion of tenderness, and kissed him over and over again upon both cheeks, so loudly and plentifully that the echo resounded through the apartment. In his life Rodin had never been so treated. More and more uneasy at the treachery which must needs lurk

under such warm embraces, and irritated by his own evil presentiments, the French Jesuit did all he could to extricate himself from the Roman's exaggerated tokens of tenderness. But the latter kept his hold; his arms, though short, were vigorous, and Rodin was kissed over and over again, till the little one-eyed man was quite out of breath. It is hardly necessary to state that these embraces were accompanied by the most friendly, affectionate, and fraternal exclamations—all in tolerably good French, but with a strong Italian accent, which we must beg the reader to supply for himself, after we have given a single specimen. It will perhaps be remembered that, fully aware of the danger he might possibly incur by his ambitious machinations, and knowing from history that the use of poison had often been considered at Rome as a state of necessity, Rodin, on being suddenly attacked with the cholera, had exclaimed, with a furious glance at Cardinal Malipieri, "I am poisoned!"

The same apprehensions occurred involuntarily to the Jesuit's mind as he tried, by useless efforts, to escape from the embraces of the Italian emissary; and he could not help muttering to himself, "This one-eyed fellow is a great deal too fond.

I hope there is no poison under his Judas-kisses." At last, little Father Caboccini, being quite out of breath, was obliged to relinquish his hold on Rodin's neck, who, readjusting his dirty collar and his old cravat and waistcoat, somewhat in disorder in consequence of this hurricane of caresses, said in a gruff tone, "Your humble servant, father, but you need not kiss quite so hard."

Without making any answer to this reproach, the little father riveted his one eye upon Rodin with an expression of enthusiasm, and exclaimed, while he accompanied his words with petulant gestures, "At lazt I zee te zuperb light of our zacred Company, and can zalute him from my heart —vonse more, vonce more."

As the little father had already recovered his breath, and was about to rush once again into Rodin's arms, the latter stepped back hastily, and held out his arm to keep him off, saying, in allusion to the illogical metaphor employed by Father Caboccini, "First of all, father, one does not embrace a light—and then I am not a light—I am a humble and obscure laborer in the Lord's vineyard."

The Roman replied with enthusiasm (we shall henceforth translate his gibberish),

"You are right, father, we cannot embrace a light, but we can prostrate ourselves before it, and admire its dazzling brightness."

So saying, Caboccini was about to suit the action to the word, and to prostrate himself before Rodin, had not the latter prevented this mode of adulation by seizing the Roman by the arm and exclaiming, "This is mere idolatry, father. Pass over my qualities, and tell me what is the object of your journey."

"The object, my dear father, fills me with joy and happiness. I have endeavored to show you my affection by my caresses, for my heart is overflowing. I have hardly been able to restrain myself during my journey hither, for my heart rushed to meet you. The object transports, delights, enchants me—"

"But what enchants you?" cried Rodin, exasperated by these Italian exaggerations. "What is the object?"

"This receipt of our very reverend and excellent general will inform you, my dear father."

Caboccini drew from his pocketbook a folded paper, with three seals, which he kissed respectfully, and delivered to Rodin, who himself kissed it in his turn, and opened it with visible anxiety. While he

read it, the countenance of the Jesuit remained impassible, but the pulsations of the arteries on his temples announced his internal agitation. Yet he put the letter coolly into his pocket, and looking at the Roman, said to him, "Be it as our excellent general has commanded."

"Then, father," cried Caboccini, with a new effusion of tenderness and admiration, "I shall be the shadow of your light, and, in fact, your second self. I shall have the happiness of being always with you, day and night, and of acting as your *socius*, since, after having allowed you to be without one for some time, according to your wish, and for the interest of our blessed Company, our excellent general now thinks fit to send me from Rome, to fill that post about your person—an unexpected, an immense favor, which fills me with gratitude to our general, and with love to you, my dear, my excellent father!"

"It is well played," thought Rodin; "but I am not so soft, and it is only among the blind that your cyclops are kings!"

. . . . . .

The evening of the day in which this scene took place between the Jesuit and his new *socius*, Ninny Moulin, after receiving in presence of Caboccini the in-

structions of Rodin, went straight to Madame de la Sainte-Colombe's.

This woman had made her fortune at the time of the Allies taking Paris, by keeping one of those "pretty milliner's shops," whose "pink bonnets" have run into a proverb not extinct in these days when bonnets are not known. Ninny Moulin had no better well to draw inspiration from when, as now, he had to find out, as per Rodin's order, a girl of an age and appearance which, singularly enough, were closely resembling those of Mdlle. de Cardoville.

No doubt of Ninny Moulin's success in this mission, for the next morning Rodin, whose countenance wore a triumphant expression, put with his own hand a letter into the post.

This letter was addressed

"To M. Agricola Baudion,
"No. 2, Rue Brise-Miche,
"Paris."

CHAPTER LXIII.

FARINGHEA'S AFFECTION.

It will, perhaps, be remembered that Djalma, when he heard for the first time that he was beloved by Adrienne, had, in the fullness of his joy, spoken thus to Far-

inghea, whose treachery he had just discovered, "You leagued with my enemies, and I had done you no harm. You are wicked, because you are no doubt unhappy. I will strive to make you happy, so that you may be good. Would you have gold? —you shall have it. Would you have a friend?—though you are a slave, a king's son offers you his friendship."

Faringhea had refused the gold, and appeared to accept the friendship of the son of Kadja-sing. Endowed with remarkable intelligence, and extraordinary power of dissimulation, the half-breed had easily persuaded the prince of the sincerity of his repentance, and obtained credit for his gratitude and attachment from so confiding and generous a character. Besides, what motives could Djalma have to suspect the slave, now become his friend? Certain of the love of Mdlle. de Cardoville, with whom he passed a portion of every day, her salutary influence would have guarded him against any dangerous counsels or calumnies of the half-caste, a faithful and secret instrument of Rodin, and attached by him to the Company. But Faringhea, whose tact was amazing, did not act so lightly; he never spoke to the prince of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and

waited unobtrusively for the confidential communications into which Djalma was sometimes hurried by his excessive joy. A few days after the interview last described between Adrienne and Djalma, and on the morrow of the day when Rodin, certain of the success of Ninny Moulin's mission to Sainte-Colombe, had himself put a letter in the post to the address of Agricola Baudoin, the half-caste, who for some time had appeared oppressed with a violent grief, seemed to get so much worse that the prince, struck with the desponding air of the man, asked him kindly and repeatedly the cause of his sorrow. But Faringhea, while he gratefully thanked the prince for the interest he took in him, maintained the most absolute silence and reserve on the subject of his grief.

These preliminaries will enable the reader to understand the following scene, which took place about noon in the house in the Rue de Clichy occupied by the Hindoo. Contrary to his habit, Djalma had not passed that morning with Adrienne. He had been informed the evening before, by the young lady, that she must ask of him the sacrifice of this whole day, to take the necessary measures to make their marriage sacred, and acceptable in the eyes of the

world, and yet free from the restrictions which she and Djalma disapproved. As for the means to be employed by Mdlle. de Cardoville to attain this end, and the name of the pure and honorable person who was to consecrate their union, these were secrets which, not belonging exclusively to the young lady, could not yet be communicated to Djalma. To the Indian, so long accustomed to devote every instant to Adrienne, this day seemed interminable. By turns a prey to the most burning agitation, and to a kind of stupor, in which he plunged himself to escape from the thoughts that caused his tortures, Djalma lay stretched upon a divan, with his face buried in his hands, as if to shut out the view of a too enchanting vision. Suddenly, without knocking at the door, as usual, Faringhea entered the prince's apartment.

At the noise the half-caste made in entering, Djalma started, raised his head, and looked round him with surprise; but, on seeing the pale, agitated countenance of the slave, he rose hastily, and advancing toward him, exclaimed: "What is the matter, Faringhea?"

After a moment's silence, and as if struggling with a painful feeling of hesitation, Faringhea threw himself at the feet of

Djalma, and murmured in a weak, despairing, almost supplicating voice: "I am very miserable. Pity me, my good lord!"

The tone was so touching, the grief under which the half-breed suffered seemed to give to his features, generally fixed and hard as bronze, such a heartrending expression, that Djalma was deeply affected, and, bending to raise him from the ground, said to him, in a kindly voice: "Speak to me! Confidence appeases the torments of the heart. Trust me, friend—for my angel herself said to me that happy love cannot bear to see tears about him."

"But unhappy love, miserable love, betrayed love—weeps tears of blood," replied Faringhea, with painful dejection.

"Of what love dost thou speak?" asked Djalma, in surprise.

"I speak of my love," answered the half-caste, with a gloomy air.

"Of *your* love?" said Djalma, more and more astonished; not that the half-caste, still young, and with a countenance of somber beauty, appeared to him incapable of inspiring or feeling the tender passion, but that, until now, he had never imagined him capable of conceiving so deep a sorrow.

"My lord," resumed the half-caste, "you

told me that misfortune had made me wicked, and that happiness would make me good. In those words, I saw a presentiment, and a noble love entered my heart at the moment when hatred and treachery departed from it. I, the half-savage, found a woman, beautiful and young, to respond to my passion. At least I thought so. But I had betrayed you, my lord, and there is no happiness for a traitor, even though he repent. In my turn, I have been shamefully betrayed."

Then, seeing the surprise of the prince, the half-caste added, as if overwhelmed with confusion: "Do not mock me, my lord! The most frightful tortures would not have wrung this confession from me; but you, the son of a king, deigned to call the poor slave your friend!"

"And your friend thanks you for the confidence," answered Djalma. "Far from mocking, he will console you. Mock you! do you think it possible?"

"Betrayed love merits contempt and insult," said Faringhea, bitterly. "Even cowards may point at one with scorn—for, in this country, the sight of the man deceived in what is dearest to his soul, the very life-blood of his life, only makes people shrug their shoulders and laugh."

"But are you certain of this treachery?" said Djalma, mildly. Then he added, with a visible hesitation, that proved the goodness of his heart: "Listen to me, and forgive me for speaking of the past! It will only be another proof that I cherish no evil memories, and that I fully believe in your repentance and affection. Remember, that I also once thought that she, who is the angel of my life, did not love me—and yet it was false. Who tells you that you are not, like me, deceived by false appearances?"

"Alas, my lord! could I only believe so! But I dare not hope it. My brain wanders uncertain, I cannot come to any resolution, and therefore I have recourse to you."

"But what causes your suspicions?"

"Her coldness, which sometimes succeeds to apparent tenderness. The refusals she gives me in the name of duty. Yes," added the half-caste, after a moment's silence, "she reasons about her love—a proof that she has never loved me, or that she loves me no more."

"On the contrary, she perhaps loves you all the more that she takes into consideration the interest and the dignity of her love."

"That is what they all say," replied the half-caste, with bitter irony, as he fixed a

penetrating look on Djalma; "thus speak all those who love weakly, coldly; but those who love valiantly never show these insulting suspicions. For them, a word from the man they adore is a command; they do not haggle and bargain, for the cruel pleasure of exciting the passion of their lover to madness, and so ruling him more surely. No, what their lover asks of them, were it to cost life and honor, they would grant it without hesitation—because, with them, the will of the man they love is above every other consideration, divine and human. But those crafty women, whose pride it is to tame and conquer man—who take delight in irritating his passion, and sometimes appear on the point of yielding to it—are demons, who rejoice in the tears and torments of the wretch that loves them with the miserable weakness of a child. While we expire with love at their feet, the perfidious creatures are calculating the effects of their refusals, and seeing how far they can go, without quite driving their victim to despair. Oh! how cold and cowardly are they, compared to the valiant, true-hearted women, who say to the men of their choice: 'Let me be thine to-day—and to-morrow, come shame, despair, and death

—it matters little! Be happy! my life is not worth one tear of thine—' "

Djalma's brow had darkened as he listened. Having kept inviolable the secret of the various incidents of his passion for Mdlle. de Cardoville, he could not but see in these words a quite involuntary allusion to the delays and refusals of Adrienne. And yet Djalma suffered a moment in his pride, at the thought of considerations and duties that a woman holds dearer than her love. But this bitter and painful thought was soon effaced from the Oriental's mind, thanks to the beneficent influence of the remembrance of Adrienne. His brow again cleared, and he answered the half-caste, who was watching him attentively with a sidelong glance: "You are deluded by grief. If you have no other reason to doubt her you love than these refusals and vague suspicions, be satisfied! You are perhaps loved better than you can imagine."

"Alas! would it were so, my lord!" replied the half-caste, dejectedly, as if he had been deeply touched by the words of Djalma. "Yet I say to myself: There is for this woman something stronger than her love—delicacy, dignity, honor, what you will—but she does not love me enough to sacrifice for me this something!"

"Friend, you are deceived," answered Djalma, mildly, though the words affected him with a painful impression. "The greater the love of a woman the more it should be chaste and noble. It is love itself that awakens this delicacy and these scruples. He rules, instead of being ruled."

"That is true," replied the half-caste, with bitter irony. "Love so rules me that this woman bids me love in her own fashion, and I have only to submit."

Pausing suddenly Faringhea hid his face in his hands, and heaved a deep drawn sigh. His features expressed a mixture of hate, rage, and despair, at once so terrible and so pianful that Djalma, more and more affected, exclaimed, as he seized the other's hand: "Calm this fury, and listen to the voice of friendship! It will disperse this evil influence. Speak to me!"

"No, no! it is too dreadful!"

"Speak, I bid thee."

"No! leave the wretch to his despair!"

"Do you think me capable of that?" said Djalma, with a mixture of mildness and dignity, which seemed to make an impression on the half-caste.

"Alas!" replied he, hesitating; "do you wish to hear more, my lord?"

'I wish to hear all."

"Well, then! I have not told you all—for, at the moment of making this confession, shame and the fear of ridicule kept me back. You asked me what reason I had to believe myself betrayed. I spoke to you of vague suspicions, refusals, coldness. That is not all—this evening—"

"Go on!"

"This evening—she made an appointment—with a man that she prefers to me."

"Who told you so?"

"A stranger who pitied my blindness."

"And suppose the man deceives you—or deceives himself?"

"He has offered me proofs of what he advances."

"What proofs?"

"He will enable me this evening to witness the interview. 'It may be,' said he, 'that this appointment may have no guilt in it, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary. Judge for yourself, have courage, and your cruel indecision will be at an end.'"

"And what did you answer?"

"Nothing, my lord; my head wandered as it does now, and I came to you for advice."

Then making a gesture of despair, he proceeded with a savage laugh: "Advice? It is from the blade of my kandjiar that I

should ask counsel! It would answer: 'Blood! blood!' "

Faringhea grasped convulsively the long dagger attached to his girdle. There is a sort of contagion in certain forms of passion. At sight of Faringhea's countenance, agitated by jealous fury, Djalma shuddered—for he remembered the fit of insane rage with which he had been possessed, when the Princess de Saint-Dizier had defied Adrienne to contradict her, as to the discovery of Agricola Baudoin in her bedchamber. But then, reassured by the lady's proud and noble bearing, Djalma had soon learned to despise the horrible calumny which Adrienne had not even thought worthy of an answer. Still, two or three times, as the lightning will flash suddenly across the clearest sky, the remembrance of that shameful accusation had crossed the prince's mind, like a streak of fire, but had almost instantly vanished, in the serenity and happiness of his ineffable confidence in Adrienne's heart. These memories, however, while they saddened the mind of Djalma, only made him more compassionate with regard to Faringhea than he might have been without this strange coincidence between the position of the half-caste and his own. Know-

ing, by his own experience, to what madness a blind fury may be carried, and wishing to tame the half-caste by affectionate kindness, Djalma said to him in a grave and mild tone: "I offered you my friendship. I will now act toward you as a friend."

But Faringhea, seemingly a prey to a dull and mute frenzy, stood with fixed and haggard eyes, as though he did not hear Djalma.

The latter laid his hand on his shoulder, and resumed: "Faringhea, listen to me!"

"My lord," said the half-caste, starting abruptly, as from a dream, "forgive me—but—"

"In the anguish occasioned by these cruel suspicions, it is not of your kandjiar that you must take counsel—but of your friend."

"My lord—"

"To this interview, which will prove the innocence or the treachery of your beloved, you will do well to go."

"Oh, yes!" said the half-caste, in a hollow voice, and with a bitter smile; "I shall be there."

"But you must not go alone."

"What do you mean, my lord?" cried the half-caste. "Who will accompany me?"

"I will."

"You, my lord?"

"Yes — perhaps, to save you from a crime—for I know how blind and unjust is the earliest outburst of rage."

"But that transport gives us revenge!" cried the half-caste, with a cruel smile.

"Faringhea, this day is all my own. I shall not leave you," said the prince, resolutely. "Either you shall not go to this interview, or I will accompany you."

The half-caste appeared conquered by this generous perseverance. He fell at the feet of Djalma, pressed the prince's hand respectfully to his forehead and to his lips, and said: "My lord, be generous to the end! forgive me!"

"For what should I forgive you?"

"Before I spoke to you, I had the audacity to think of asking for what you have just freely offered. Not knowing to what extent my fury might carry me, I had thought of asking you this favor, which you would not perhaps grant to an equal, but I did not dare to do it. I shrunk even from the avowal of the treachery I have cause to fear, and I came only to tell you of my misery—because to you alone in all the world I could tell it."

It is impossible to describe the almost

candid simplicity with which the half-breed pronounced these words, and the soft tones, mingled with tears, which had succeeded his savage fury. Deeply affected, Djalma raised him from the ground, and said: "You were entitled to ask of me a mark of friendship. I am happy in having forestalled you. Courage! be of good cheer! I will accompany you to this interview, and, if my hopes do not deceive me, you will find you have been deluded by false appearances."

. . . . . .

When the night was come, the half-breed and Djalma, wrapped in their cloaks, got into a hackney-coach. Faringhea ordered the coachman to drive to the house inhabited by Sainte-Colombe.

CHAPTER LXIV.

AN EVENING AT SAINTE-COLOMBE'S.

LEAVING Djalma and Faringhea in the coach, on their way, a few words are indispensable before continuing this scene. Ninny Moulin, ignorant of the real object of the step he took at the instigation of Rodin, had, on the evening before, according to orders received from the latter, offered a considerable sum to Sainte-Co-

lombe, to obtain from that creature (still singularly rapacious) the use of her apartments for a whole day. Sainte-Colombe, having accepted this proposition, too advantageous to be refused, had set out that morning with her servants, to whom she wished, she said, in return for their good services, to give a day's pleasure in the country. Master of the house, Rodin, in a black wig, blue spectacles, and a cloak, and with his mouth and chin buried in a worsted comforter—in a word, perfectly disguised—had gone that morning to take a look at the apartments, and to give his instructions to the half-caste. The latter, in two hours from the departure of the Jesuit, had, thanks to his address and intelligence, completed the most important preparations, and returned in haste to Djalma, to play with detestable hypocrisy the scene at which we have just been present.

During the ride from the Rue de Clichy to the Rue de Richelieu, Faringhea appeared plunged in a mournful reverie. Suddenly, he said to Djalma in a quick tone: "My lord, if I am betrayed, I must have vengeance."

"Contempt is a terrible revenge," answered Djalma.

"No, no," replied the half-caste, with an accent of repressed rage. "It is not enough. The nearer the moment approaches, the more I feel I must have blood."

"Listen to me—"

"My lord, have pity on me! I was a coward to draw back from my revenge. Let me leave you, my lord! I will go alone to this interview."

So saying, Faringhea made a movement, as if he would spring from the carriage.

Djalma held him by the arm, and said: "Remain! I will not leave you. If you are betrayed, you shall not shed blood. Contempt will avenge and friendship will console you."

"No, no, my lord; I am resolved. When I have killed—then I will kill myself," cried the half-caste, with savage excitement. "This kandjiar for the false ones!" added he, laying his hand on his dagger. "The poison in the hilt for me."

"Faringhea—"

"If I resist you, my lord, forgive me! My destiny must be accomplished."

Time pressed, and Djalma, despairing to calm the other's ferocious rage, resolved to have recourse to a stratagem.

After some minutes' silence, he said to Faringhea: "I will not leave you. I will do all I can to save you from a crime. If I do not succeed, the blood you shed be on your own head. This hand shall never again be locked in yours."

These words appeared to make a deep impression on Faringhea. He breathed a long sigh, and, bowing his head upon his breast, remained silent and full of thought. Djalma prepared, by the faint light of the lamps reflected in the interior of the coach, to throw himself suddenly on the half-caste, and disarm him. But the latter, who saw at a glance the intention of the prince, drew his kandjiar abruptly from his girdle, and holding it still in its sheath, said to the prince in a half-solemn, half-savage tone: "This dagger, in a strong hand, is terrible; and in this vial is one of the most subtle poisons of our country."

He touched a spring, and the knob at the top of the hilt rose like a lid, discovering the mouth of a small crystal vial concealed in this murderous weapon.

"Two or three drops of this poison upon the lips," resumed the half-caste, "and death comes slowly and peacefully, in a few hours, and without pain. Only, for the first symptom, the nails turn blue.

But he who emptied this vial at a draught would fall dead, as if struck by lightning."

"Yes," replied Djalma; "I know that our country produces such mysterious poisons. But why lay such stress on the murderous properties of this weapon?"

"To show you, my lord, that this kandjiar would insure the success and impunity of my vengeance. With the blade I could destroy, and by the poison escape from human justice. Well, my lord! this kandjiar—take it—I give it up to you—I renounce my vengeance—rather than render myself unworthy to clasp again your hand!"

He presented the dagger to the prince, who, as pleased as surprised at this unexpected determination, hastily secured the terrible weapon beneath his own girdle, while the half-breed continued, in a voice of emotion: "Keep this kandjiar, my lord—and when you have seen and heard all that we go to hear and see—you shall either give me the dagger to strike a wretch—or the poison, to die without striking. You shall command; I will obey."

Djalma was about to reply, when the coach stopped at the house inhabited by Sainte-Colombe. The prince and the half-caste, well enveloped in their mantles, en-

tered a dark porch, and the door was closed after them. Faringhea exchanged a few words with the porter, and the latter gave him a key. The two Orientals soon arrived at Sainte-Colombe's apartments, which had two doors opening upon the landing-place, besides a private entrance from the courtyard. As he put the key into the lock, Faringhea said to Djalma, in an agitated voice: "Pity my weakness, my lord—but, at this terrible moment, I tremble and hesitate. It were perhaps better to doubt—or to forget!"

Then, as the prince was about to answer, the half-caste exclaimed: "No! we must have no cowardice!" and, opening the door precipitately, he entered, followed by Djalma.

When the door was again closed, the prince and the half-caste found themselves in a dark and narrow passage. "Your hand, my lord—let me guide you—walk lightly," said Faringhea, in a low whisper.

He extended his hand to the prince, who took hold of it, and they both advanced silently through the darkness. After leading Djalma some distance, and opening and closing several doors, the half-caste stopped abruptly, and, abandoning the hand which he had hitherto held, said

to the prince: "My lord, the decisive moment approaches; let us wait here for a few seconds."

A profound silence followed these words of the half-caste. The darkness was so complete that Djalma could distinguish nothing. In about a minute, he heard Faringhea moving away from him; and then a door was suddenly opened, and as abruptly closed and locked. This circumstance made Djalma somewhat uneasy. By a mechanical movement, he laid his hand upon his dagger, and advanced cautiously toward the side, where he supposed the door to be.

Suddenly, the half-caste's voice struck upon his ear, though it was impossible to guess whence it came. "My lord," it said, "you told me you were my friend. I act as a friend. If I have employed stratagem to bring you hither, it is because the blindness of your fatal passion would otherwise have prevented your accompanying me. The Princess de Saint-Dizier named to you Agricola Baudoin, the lover of Adrienne de Cardoville. Listen —look—judge!"

The voice ceased. It appeared to have issued from one corner of the room. Djalma, still in darkness, perceived too late

into what a snare he had fallen, and trembled with rage—almost with alarm.

"Faringhea!" he exclaimed; "where am I? where are you? Open the door on your life! I would leave this place instantly."

Extending his arms, the prince advanced hastily several steps, but he only touched a tapestried wall; he followed it, hoping to find the door, and he at length found it; but it was locked, and resisted all his efforts. He continued his researches, and came to a fireplace with no fire in it, and to a second door, equally fast. In a few moments, he had thus made the circle of the room, and found himself again at the fireplace. The anxiety of the prince increased more and more. He called Faringhea, in a voice trembling with passion. There was no answer. Profound silence reigned without, and complete darkness within. Ere long, a perfumed vapor, of indescribable sweetness, but very subtle and penetrating, spread itself insensibly through the little room in which Djalma was. It might be that the orifice of a tube, passing through one of the doors of the room, introduced this balmy current. At the height of angry and terrible thoughts, Djalma paid no attention to

this odor—but soon the arteries of his temples began to beat violently, a burning heat seemed to circulate rapidly through his veins, he felt a sensation of pleasure, his resentment died gradually away, and a mild, ineffable torpor crept over him, without his being fully conscious of the mental transformation that was taking place. Yet, by a last effort of the wavering will, Djalma advanced once more to try and open one of the doors; he found it indeed, but at this place the vapor was so strong that its action redoubled, and, unable to move a step further, Djalma was obliged to support himself by leaning against the wall.*

Then a strange thing happened. A faint light spread itself gradually through an adjoining apartment, and Djalma now perceived, for the first time, the existence of a little round window, in the wall of the room in which he was. On the side of the prince, this opening was protected by a slight but strong railing, which hardly in-

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*See the strange effects of hasheesh. To the effect of this is attributed the kind of hallucination which seized on those unhappy persons, whom the Prince of the Assassins (the Old Man of the Mountain) used as the instruments of his vengeance.

tercepted the view. On the other side a thick piece of plate-glass was fixed at the distance of two or three inches from the railing in question. The room, which Djalma saw through this window, and through which the faint light was now gradually spreading, was richly furnished. Between two windows, hung with crimson silk curtains, stood a kind of wardrobe, with a looking-glass front; opposite the fireplace, in which glowed the burning coals, was a long, wide divan, furnished with cushions.

In another second a woman entered this apartment. Her face and figure were invisible, being wrapped in a long, hooded mantle of peculiar form and a dark color. The sight of this mantle made Djalma start. To the pleasure he at first felt succeeded a feverish anxiety, like the growing fumes of intoxication. There was that strange buzzing in his ears which we experience when we plunge into deep waters. It was in a kind of delirium that Djalma looked on at what was passing in the next room. The woman who had just appeared entered with caution, almost with fear. Drawing aside one of the window curtains, she glanced through the closed blinds into the street. Then she returned slowly to

the fireplace, where she stood for a moment pensive, still carefully enveloped in her mantle. Completely yielding to the influence of the vapor, which deprived him of his presence of mind—forgetting Faringhea, and all the circumstances that had accompanied his arrival at this house—Djalma concentrated all the powers of his attention on the spectacle before him, at which he seemed to be present as in a dream.

Suddenly Djalma saw the woman leave the fireplace and advance toward the looking-glass. Turning her face toward it, she allowed the mantle to glide down to her feet. Djalma was thunderstruck. He saw the face of Adrienne de Cardoville. Yes, Adrienne, as he had seen her the night before, attired as during her interview with the Princess de Saint-Dizier—the light green dress, the rose-colored ribbons, the white head ornaments. A network of white beads concealed her back hair, and harmonized admirably with the shining gold of her ringlets. Finally, as far as the Hindoo could judge through the railing and the thick glass, and in the faint light, it was the figure of Adrienne, with her marble shoulders and swan-like neck, so proud and so graceful. In a word, he

could not, he did not doubt that it was Adrienne de Cardoville. Djalma was bathed in a burning dew, his dizzy excitement increased, and, with bloodshot eye and heaving bosom, he remained motionless, gazing almost without the power of thought. The young lady, with her back still turned toward Djalma, arranged her hair with graceful art, took off the network which formed her head-dress, placed it on the chimney-piece, and began to unfasten her gown; then, withdrawing from the looking-glass, she disappeared for an instant from Djalma's view.

"She is expecting Agricola Baudoin, her lover," said a voice, which seemed to proceed from the wall of the dark room in which Djalma was.

Notwithstanding his bewilderment, these terrible words, "She is expecting Agricola Baudoin, her lover," passed like a stream of fire through the brain and heart of the prince. A cloud of blood came over his eyes, he uttered a hollow groan, which the thickness of the glass prevented from being heard in the next room, and broke his nails in attempting to tear down the iron railing before the window.

Having reached this paroxysm of delirious rage, Djalma saw the uncertain light

grow still fainter, as if it had been discreetly obscured; and, through the vapory shadow that hung before him, he perceived the young lady returning, clad in a long white dressing-gown, and with her golden curls floating over her naked arms and shoulders. She advanced cautiously in the direction of a door which was hid from Djalma's view. At this moment, one of the doors of the apartment in which the prince was concealed was gently opened by an invisible hand. Djalma noticed it by the click of the lock, and by the current of fresh air which streamed upon his face, for he could see nothing. This door, left open for Djalma, like that of the next room, to which the young lady had drawn near, led to a sort of antechamber communicating with the stairs, which some one now rapidly ascended, and, stopping short, knocked twice at the outer door.

"Here comes Agricola Baudoin. Look and listen!" said the same voice that the prince had already heard.

Mad, intoxicated, but with the fixed idea and reckless determination of a madman or a drunkard, Djalma drew the dagger which Faringhea had left in his possession, and stood in motionless expectation. Hardly were the two knocks heard before

FATHER CABOCCINI.

—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 5, p. 456.

the young lady quitted the apartment, from which streamed a faint ray of light, ran to the door of the staircase, so that some faint glimmer reached the place where Djalma stood watching, his dagger in his hand. He saw the young lady pass across the antechamber, and approach the door of the staircase, where she said in a whisper: "Who is there?"

"It is I—Agricola Baudoin," answered, from without, a manly voice.

What followed was rapid as lightning, and must be conceived rather than described. Hardly had the young lady drawn the bolt of the door, hardly had Agricola Baudoin stepped across the threshold, than Djalma, with the bound of a tiger, stabbed as it were at once, so rapid were the strokes, both the young lady, who fell dead on the floor, and Agricola, who sunk, dangerously wounded, by the side of the unfortunate victim. This scene of murder, rapid as thought, took place in the midst of a half obscurity. Suddenly the faint light from the chamber was completely extinguished, and a second after, Djalma felt his arm seized in the darkness by an iron grasp, and the voice of Faringhea whispered: "You are avenged. Come; we can secure our retreat." Inert, stupefied at what he

had done, Djalma offered no resistance, and let himself be dragged by the half-caste into the inner apartment, from which there was another way out.

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When Rodin had exclaimed, in his admiration of the generative power of thought, that the word NECKLACE had been the germ of the infernal project he then contemplated, it was, that chance had brought to his mind the remembrance of the too famous affair of the diamond necklace, in which a woman, thanks to her vague resemblance to Queen Marie Antoinette, being dressed like that princess, and favored by the uncertainty of a twilight, had played so skillfully the part of her unfortunate sovereign as to make the Cardinal de Rohan, though familiar with the court, the complete dupe of the illusion. Having once determined on his execrable design, Rodin had sent Jacques Dumoulin to Sainte-Colombe, without telling him the real object of his mission, to ask this experienced woman to procure a fine young girl, tall, and with red hair. Once found, a costume exactly resembling that worn by Adrienne, and of which the Princess de Saint-Dizier gave the description to Rodin (though herself ignorant of this new plot),

was to complete the deception. The rest is known, or may be guessed. The unfortunate girl, who acted as Adrienne's double, believed she was only aiding in a jest. As for Agricola, he had received a letter, in which he was invited to a meeting that might be of the greatest importance to Mdlle. de Cardoville.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE NUPTIAL BED.

THE mild light of a circular lamp of oriental alabaster, suspended from the ceiling by three silver chains, spreads a faint luster through the bed-chamber of Adrienne de Cardoville. The large ivory bedstead, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, is not at present occupied, and almost disappears beneath snowy curtains of lace and muslin, transparent and vapory as clouds. On the white marble mantel-piece, from beneath which the fire throws ruddy beams on the ermine carpet, is the usual basket filled with a bush of red camellias, in the midst of their shining green leaves. A pleasant aromatic odor, rising from a warm and perfumed bath in the next room, penetrates every corner of the bed-chamber. All without is calm and silent. It is hardly

eleven o'clock. The ivory door, opposite to that which leads to the bath-room, opens slowly. Djalma appears. Two hours have elapsed since he committed a double murder, and believed that he had killed Adrienne in a fit of jealous fury.

The servants of Mdlle. de Cardoville, accustomed to Djalma's daily visits, no longer announced his arrival, and admitted him without difficulty, having received no orders to the contrary from their mistress. He had never before entered the bed-chamber; but, knowing that the apartment the lady occupied was on the first floor of the house, he easily found it. As he entered that virgin sanctuary his countenance was pretty calm, so well did he control his feelings; only a slight paleness tarnished the brilliant amber of his complexion. He wore that day a robe of purple cashmere, striped with silver—a color which did not show the stains of blood upon it. Djalma closed the door after him, and tore off his white turban, for it seemed to him as if a band of hot iron encircled his brow. His dark hair streamed around his handsome face. He crossed his arms upon his bosom and looked slowly about him. When his eyes rested on Adrienne's bed, he started suddenly, and his cheek grew purple.

Then he drew his hand across his brow, hung down his head, and remained standing for some moments in a dream, motionless as a statue.

After a mournful silence of a few seconds' duration, Djalma fell upon his knees and raised his eyes to Heaven. The Asiatic's countenance was bathed in tears, and no longer expressed any violent passion. On his features was no longer the stamp of hate, or despair, or the ferocious joy of vengeance gratified. It was rather the expression of a grief at once simple and immense. For several minutes he was almost choked with sobs, and the tears ran freely down his cheeks.

"Dead! dead!" he murmured, in a half-stifled voice. "She, who this morning slept so peacefully in this chamber! And I have killed her. Now that she is dead, what is her treachery to me? I should not have killed her for that. She had betrayed me; she loved the man whom I slew—she loved him! Alas! I could not hope to gain the preference," added he, with a touching mixture of resignation and remorse: "I, poor, untaught youth—how could I merit her love? It was my fault that she did not love me; but, always generous, she concealed from me her indifference, that she

might not make me too unhappy—and for that I killed her. What was her crime? Did she not meet me freely? Did she not open to me her dwelling? Did she not allow me to pass whole days with her? No doubt she tried to love me, and could not. I loved her with all the faculties of my soul, but my love was not such as she required. For that, I should not have killed her. But a fatal delusion seized me, and, after it was done, I woke as from a dream. Alas! it was not a dream: I have killed her. And yet—until this evening—what happiness I owed to her—what hope—what joy! She made my heart better, nobler, more generous. All came from her," added the Indian, with a new burst of grief. "That remained with me—no one could take from me that treasure of the past—that ought to have consoled me. But why think of it? I struck them both—her and the man—without a struggle. It was a cowardly murder—the ferocity of the tiger that tears its innocent prey!"

Djalma buried his face in his hands. Then, drying his tears, he resumed, "I know, clearly, that I mean to die also. But my death will not restore her to life!"

He rose from the ground, and drew from his girdle Faringhea's bloody dagger; then,

taking the little vial from the hilt, he threw the blood-stained blade upon the ermine carpet, the immaculate whiteness of which was thus slightly stained with red.

"Yes," resumed Djalma, holding the vial with a convulsive grasp, "I know well that I am about to die. It is right. Blood for blood; my life for hers. How happens it that my steel did not turn aside? How could I kill her?—but it is done—and my heart is full of remorse and sorrow, and inexpressible tenderness—and I have come here—to die!

"Here, in this chamber," he continued, "the heaven of my burning visions!" And then he added, with a heartrending accent, as he again buried his face in his hands, "Dead! dead!"

"Well! I too shall soon be dead," he resumed, in a firmer voice. "But, no! I will die slowly, gradually. A few drops of the poison will suffice, and, when I am quite certain of dying, my remorse will perhaps be less terrible. Yesterday, she pressed my hand when we parted. Who could have foretold me this?" The Indian raised the vial resolutely to his lips. He drank a few drops of the liquor it contained, and replaced it on a little ivory table close to Adrienne's bed.

"This liquor is sharp and hot," said he. "Now I am certain to die. Oh! that I may still have time to feast on the sight and perfume of this chamber—to lay my dying head on the couch where she has reposed."

Djalma fell on his knees beside the bed, and leaned against it his burning brow. At this moment, the ivory door, which communicated with the bath-room, rolled gently on its hinges, and Adrienne entered. The young lady had just sent away her woman, who had assisted to undress her. She wore a long muslin wrapper of lustrous whiteness. Her golden hair, neatly arranged in little plaits, formed two bands, which gave to her sweet face an extremely juvenile air. Her snowy complexion was slightly tinged with rose-color, from the warmth of the perfumed bath, which she used for a few seconds every evening. When she opened the ivory door, and placed her little naked foot, in its white satin slipper, upon the ermine carpet, Adrienne was dazzlingly beautiful. Happiness sparkled in her eyes and adorned her brow. All the difficulties relative to her union with Djalma had now been removed. In two days she would be his. The sight of the nuptial chamber oppressed

her with a vague and ineffable languor. The ivory door had been opened so gently, the lady's first steps were so soft upon the fur-carpet, that Djalma, still leaning against the bed, had heard nothing. But suddenly a cry of surprise and alarm struck upon his ear. He turned round abruptly. Adrienne stood before him.

With an impulse of modesty, Adrienne closed her night-dress over her bosom, and hastily drew back, still more afflicted than angry at what she considered a guilty attempt on the part of Djalma. Cruelly hurt and offended, she was about to reproach him for his conduct, when she perceived the dagger, which he had thrown upon the ermine carpet. At sight of this weapon, and the expression of fear and stupor which petrified the features of Djalma, who remained kneeling, motionless, with his body thrown back, his hands stretched out, his eyes fixed and wildly staring—Adrienne, no longer dreading an amorous surprise, was seized with an indescribable terror, and, instead of flying from the prince, advanced several steps toward him, and said, in an agitated voice, while she pointed to the kandjiar, "My friend, why are you here? what ails you? why this dagger?"

Djalma made no answer. At first, the

presence of Adrienne seemed to him a vision, which he attributed to the excitement of his brain, already (it might be) under the influence of the poison. But when the soft voice sounded in his ears—when his heart bounded with the species of electric shock, which he always felt when he met the gaze of that woman so ardently beloved—when he had contemplated for an instant that adorable face, so fresh and fair, in spite of its expression of deep uneasiness—Djalma understood that he was not the sport of a dream, but that Mdlle. de Cardoville was really before his eyes.

Then, as he began fully to grasp the thought that Adrienne was not dead, though he could not at all explain the prodigy of her resurrection, the Hindoo's countenance was transfigured, the pale gold of his complexion became warm and red, his eyes (tarnished by tears of remorse) shone with new radiance, and his features, so lately contracted with terror and despair, expressed all the phases of the most ecstatic joy. Advancing, still on his knees, toward Adrienne, he lifted up to her his trembling hands, and, too deeply affected to pronounce a word, he gazed on her with so much amazement, love, adoration, gratitude, that the young lady, fasci-

nated by those inexplicable looks, remained mute also, motionless also, and felt, by the precipitate beating of her heart, and by the shudder which ran through her frame, that there was here some dreadful mystery to be unfolded.

At last, Djalma, clasping his hands together, exclaimed with an accent impossible to describe, "Thou art not dead!"

"Dead!" repeated the young lady, in amazement.

"It was not thou, really not thou, whom I killed? God is kind and just!"

And as he pronounced these words with intense joy, the unfortunate youth forgot the victim whom he had sacrificed in error.

More and more alarmed, and again glancing at the dagger, on which she now perceived marks of blood—a terrible evidence, in confirmation of the words of Djalma—Mdlle. de Cardoville exclaimed, "You have killed some one, Djalma! Oh! what does he say? It is dreadful!"

"You are alive—I see you—you are here," said Djalma, in a voice trembling with rapture. "You are here—beautiful! pure! for it was not you! Oh, no! had it been you, the steel would have turned back upon myself."

"You have killed some one?" cried the young lady, beside herself with this unforeseen revelation, and clasping her hands in horror. "Why? whom did you kill?"

"I do not know. A woman that was like you—a man that I thought was your lover—it was an illusion, a frightful dream—you are alive—you are here!"

And the Oriental wept for joy.

"A dream! but no, it is not a dream. There is blood upon that dagger!" cried the young lady, as she pointed wildly to the kandjiar. "I tell you there is blood upon it!"

"Yes. I threw it down just now, when I took the poison from it, thinking that I had killed you."

"The poison!" exclaimed Adrienne, and her teeth chattered convulsively. "What poison?"

"I thought I had killed you, and I came here to die."

"To die? Oh! wherefore? who is to die?" cried the young lady, almost in delirium.

"I," replied Djalma, with inexpressible tenderness, "I thought I had killed you—and I took poison."

"You!" exclaimed Adrienne, becoming pale as death. "You!"

"Yes."

"Oh! it is not true!" said the young lady, shaking her head.

"Look!" said the Asiatic. Mechanically he turned toward the bed—toward the little ivory table, on which sparkled the crystal vial.

With a sudden movement, swifter than thought, swifter, it may be, than the will, Adrienne rushed to the table, seized the vial, and applied it eagerly to her lips.

Djalma had hitherto remained on his knees; but he now uttered a terrible cry, made one spring to the drinker's side, and dragged away the vial, which seemed almost glued to her mouth.

"No matter! I have swallowed as much as you," said Adrienne, with an air of gloomy triumph.

For an instant there followed an awful silence. Adrienne and Djalma gazed upon each other, mute, motionless, horror-struck. The young lady was the first to break this mournful silence, and said in a tone which she tried to make calm and steady, "Well! what is there extraordinary in this? You have killed, and death must expiate your crime. It is just. I will not survive you. That also is natural enough. Why look at me

thus? This poison has a sharp taste—does it act quickly! Tell me, my Djalma!"

The prince did not answer. Shuddering through all his frame, he looked down upon his hands. Faringhea had told the truth; a slight violet tint appeared already beneath the nails. Death was approaching, slowly, almost insensibly, but not the less certain. Overwhelmed with despair at the thought that Adrienne, too, was about to die, Djalma felt his courage fail him. He uttered a long groan, and hid his face in his hands. His knees shook under him, and he fell down upon the bed, near which he was standing.

"Already?" cried the young lady in horror, as she threw herself on her knees at Djalma's feet. "Death already? Do you hide your face from me?"

In her fright, she pulled his hands from before his face. That face was bathed in tears.

"No, not yet," murmured he through his sobs. "The poison is slow."

"Really!" cried Adrienne, with ineffable joy. Then, kissing the hands of Djalma, she added tenderly, "If the poison is slow, why do you weep?"

"For you! for you!" said the Indian in a heartrending tone.

"Think not of me," replied Adrienne, resolutely. "You have killed, and we must expiate the crime. I know not what has taken place; but I swear by our love that you did not do evil for evil's sake. There is some horrible mystery in all this."

"On a pretense which I felt bound to believe," replied Djalma, speaking quickly, and panting for breath, "Faringhea led me to a certain house. Once there, he told me that you had betrayed me. I did not believe him, but I know not what strange dizziness seized upon me—and then, through a half-obscurity, I saw you—"

"Me!"

"No—not you—but a woman resembling you, dressed like you, so that I believed the illusion—and then there came a man—and you flew to meet him—and I—mad with rage—stabbed her, stabbed him, saw them fall—and so came here to die. And now I find you only to cause your death. Oh, misery! misery! that you should die through me!"

And Djalma, this man of formidable energy, began again to weep with the weakness of a child. At sight of this deep, touching, passionate despair, Adrienne, with that admirable courage which

women alone possess in love, thought only of consoling Djalma. By an effort of superhuman passion, as the prince revealed to her this infernal plot, the lady's countenance became so splendid with an expression of love and happiness that the East Indian looked at her in amazement, fearing for an instant that he must have lost his reason.

"No more tears, my adored!" cried the young lady, exultingly. "No more tears—but only smiles of joy and love! Our cruel enemies shall not triumph!"

"What do you say?"

"They wished to make us miserable. We pity them. Our felicity shall be the envy of the world!"

"Adrienne—bethink you—"

"Oh! I have all my senses about me. Listen to me, my adored! I now understand it all. Falling into a snare, which these wretches spread for you, you have committed murder. Now, in this country, murder leads to infamy, or the scaffold—and to-morrow — to-night, perhaps — you would be thrown into prison. But our enemies have said: 'A man like Prince Djalma does not wait for infamy—he kills himself. A woman like Adrienne de Cardoville does not survive the disgrace or

death of her lover—she prefers to die. Therefore a frightful death awaits them both,' said the black-robed men; 'and that immense inheritance, which we covet—' "

"And for you—so young, so beautiful, so innocent—death is frightful, and these monsters triumph!" cried Djalma. "They have spoken the truth!"

"They have lied!" answered Adrienne. "Our death shall be celestial. This poison is slow—and I adore you, my Djalma!"

She spoke those words in a low voice, trembling with passionate love, and, leaning upon Djalma's knees, approached so near that he felt her warm breath upon his cheek. As he felt that breath, and saw the humid flame that darted from the large, swimming eyes of Adrienne, whose half-opened lips were becoming of a still deeper and brighter hue—the Indian started—his young blood boiled in his veins—he forgot everything—his despair, and the approach of death, which as yet (as with Adrienne) only showed itself in a kind of feverish ardor. His face, like the young girl's, became once more splendidly beautiful.

"Oh, my lover! my husband! how beautiful you are!" said Adrienne, with idolatry. "Those eyes—that brow—those lips

—how I love them!—How many times has the remembrance of your grace and beauty, coupled with your love, unsettled my reason, and shaken my resolves—even to this moment, when I am wholly yours! —Yes, Heaven wills that we should be united. Only this morning, I gave to the apostolic man that was to bless our union, in thy name and mine, a royal gift—a gift that will bring joy and peace to the heart of many an unfortunate creature. Then what have we to regret, my beloved? Our immortal souls will pass away in a kiss, and ascend, full of love, to that God who is all love!"

"Adrienne!"

"Djalma!"

. . . . . .

The light, transparent curtains fell like a cloud over that nuptial and funereal couch. Yes, funereal; for, two hours after, Adrienne and Djalma breathed their last sigh in a voluptuous agony.

CHAPTER LXVI.

A DUEL TO THE DEATH.

ADRIENNE and Djalma died on the 30th of May. The following scene took place on the 31st, the eve of the day appointed

for the last convocation of the heirs of Marius de Rennepont. The reader will no doubt remember the room occupied by M. Hardy, in the "house of retreat" in the Rue de Vaugirard—a gloomy and retired apartment, opening on a dreary little garden, planted with yew-trees, and surrounded by high walls. To reach this chamber, it was necessary to cross two vast rooms, the doors of which, once shut, intercepted all noise and communication from without. Bearing this in mind, we may go on with our narrative. For the last three or four days, Father d'Aigrigny occupied this apartment. He had not chosen it, but had been induced to accept it, under most plausible pretexts, given him at the instigation of Rodin. It was about noon. Seated in an arm-chair, by the window, opening on the little garden, Father d'Aigrigny held in his hand a newspaper, in which he read as follows, under the head of "Paris":

"11 P.M.—A most horrible and tragical event has just excited the greatest consternation in the quarter of the Rue de Richelieu. A double murder has been committed, on the persons of a young man and a woman. The girl was killed on the spot, by the stroke of a dagger; hopes

are entertained of saving the life of the young man. The crime is attributed to jealousy. The officers of justice are investigating the matter. We shall give full particulars to-morrow."

When he had read these lines, Father d'Aigrigny threw down the paper, and remained in deep thought.

"It is incredible," said he, with bitter envy, in allusion to Rodin. "He has attained his end. Hardly one of his anticipations has been defeated. This family is annihilated, by the mere play of the passions, good and evil, that he has known how to set in motion. He said it would be so. Oh! I must confess," added Father d'Aigrigny, with a jealous and hateful smile, "that Rodin is a man of rare dissimulation, patience, energy, obstinacy, and intelligence. Who would have told me a few months ago, when he wrote under my orders, a discreet and humble *socius*, that he had already conceived the most audacious ambition, and dared to lift his eyes to the Holy See itself? that, thanks to intrigues and corruption, pursued with wondrous ability, these views were not so unreasonable? Nay, that this infernal ambition would soon be realized, were it not that the secret proceedings of this danger-

ous man have long been as secretly watched?—Ah!" sneered Father d'Aigrigny, with a smile of irony and triumph, "you wish to be a second Sixtus V., do you? And, not content with this audacious pretension, you mean, if successful, to absorb our Company in the Papacy, even as the Sultan has absorbed the Janissaries. Ah! you would make *us* your stepping-stone to power! And you have thought to humiliate and crush me with your insolent disdain! But patience, patience: the day of retribution approaches. I alone am the depositary of our General's will. Father Caboccini himself does not know that. The fate of Rodin is in my hands. Oh! it will not be what he expects. In this Rennepont affair (which, I must needs confess, he has managed admirably), he thinks to outwit us all, and to work only for himself. But to-morrow—"

Father d'Aigrigny was suddenly disturbed in these agreeable reflections. He heard the door of the next room open, and, as he turned round to see who was coming, the door of the apartment in which he was turned upon its hinges. Father d'Aigrigny started with surprise, and became almost purple. Marshal Simon stood before him. And, behind the marshal, in

the shadow of the door, Father d'Aigrigny perceived the cadaverous face of Rodin. The latter cast on him one glance of diabolical delight and instantly disappeared. The door was again closed, and Father d'Aigrigny and Marshal Simon were left alone together. The father of Rose and Blanche was hardly recognizable. His gray hair had become completely white. His pale, thin face had not been shaved for some days. His hollow eyes were bloodshot and restless, and had in them something wild and haggard. He was wrapped in a large cloak, and his black cravat was tied loosely about his neck. In withdrawing from the apartment, Rodin had (as if by inadvertence) double-locked the door on the outside. When he was alone with the Jesuit, the marshal threw back his cloak from his shoulders, and Father d'Aigrigny could see two naked swords, stuck through a silk handkerchief which served him as a belt.

Father d'Aigrigny understood it all. He remembered how, a few days before, Rodin had obstinately pressed him to say what he would do if the marshal were to strike him in the face. There could be now no doubt that he, who thought to

have held the fate of Rodin in his hands, had been brought by the latter into a fearful peril; for he knew that, the two outer rooms being closed, there was no possibility of making himself heard, and that the high walls of the garden only bordered upon some vacant lots. The first thought which occurred to him, one by no means destitute of probability, was that Rodin, either by his agents at Rome, or by his own incredible penetration, had learned that his fate depended on Father d'Aigrigny and hoped therefore to get rid of him, by delivering him over to the inexorable vengeance of the father of Rose and Blanche. Without speaking a word, the marshal unbound the handkerchief from his waist, laid the two swords upon the table, and, folding his arms upon his breast, advanced slowly toward Father d'Aigrigny. Thus these two men, who through life had pursued each other with implacable hatred, at length met face to face—they, who had fought in hostile armies, and measured swords in single combat, and one of whom now came to seek vengeance for the death of his children. As the marshal approached, Father d'Aigrigny rose from his seat. He wore that day a black cassock, which rendered

still more visible the pale hue which had now succeeded to the sudden flush on his cheek. For a few seconds the two men stood face to face without speaking. The marshal was terrific in his paternal despair. His calmness, inexorable as fate, was more impressive than the most furious burst of anger.

"My children are dead," said he at last, in a slow and hollow tone. "I come to kill you."

"Sir," cried Father d'Aigrigny, "listen to me. Do not believe—"

"I must kill you," resumed the marshal, interrupting the Jesuit; "your hate followed my wife into exile, where she perished. You and your accomplices sent my children to certain death. For twenty years you have been my evil genius. I must have your life, and I will have it."

"My life belongs, first, to God," answered Father d'Aigrigny piously, "and then to who likes to take it."

"We will fight to the death in this room," said the marshal; "and, as I have to avenge my wife and children, I am tranquil as to the result."

"Sir," answered Father d'Aigrigny, coldly, "you forget that my profession forbids me to fight. Once I accepted your

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—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 5, p. 480.

challenge — but my position is changed since then."

"Ah!" said the marshal, with a bitter smile; "you refuse to fight because you are a priest?"

"Yes, sir—because I am a priest."

"So that, because he is a priest, a wretch like you may commit any crime, any baseness, under shelter of his black gown?"

"I do not understand a word of your accusations. In any case, the law is open," said Father d'Aigrigny, biting his pale lips, for he felt deeply the insult offered by the marshal; "if you have anything to complain of, appeal to that law, before which all are equal "

Marshal Simon shrugged his shoulders in angry disdain. "Your crimes escape the law—and, could it even reach you, that would not satisfy my vengeance, after all the evil you have done me, after all you have taken from me," said the marshal; and, at the memory of his children, his voice slightly trembled; but he soon proceeded, with terrible calmness: "You must feel that I now only live for vengeance. And I must have such revenge as is worth the seeking—I must have your coward's heart palpitating on the point of my sword. Our last duel was play; this

will be earnest—oh! you shall see." The marshal walked up to the table, where he had laid the two swords. Father d'Aigrigny needed all his resolution to restrain himself. The implacable hate which he had always felt for Marshal Simon, added to these insults, filled him with savage ardor. Yet he answered, in a tone that was still calm: "For the last time, sir, I repeat to you that my profession forbids me to fight."

"Then you refuse?" said the marshal, turning abruptly toward him.

"I refuse."

"Positively?"

"Positively. Nothing on earth should force me to it."

"Nothing?"

"No, sir; nothing."

"We shall see," said the marshal, as his hand fell with its full force on the cheek of Father d'Aigrigny.

The Jesuit uttered a cry of fury; all his blood rushed to his face, so roughly handled; the courage of the man (for he was brave), his ancient military ardor, carried him away; his eyes sparkled, and, with teeth firmly set, and clinched fists, he advanced toward the marshal, exclaiming: "The swords! the swords!"

But, suddenly remembering the appearance of Rodin, and the interest which the latter had in bringing about this rencontre, he determined to avoid the diabolical snare laid by his former *socius*, and so gathered sufficient resolution to restrain his terrible resentment.

To his passing fury succeeded a calm, full of contrition; and, wishing to play his part out to the end, he knelt down, and, bowing his head and beating his bosom, repeated: "Forgive me, Lord, for yielding to a movement of rage! and above all, forgive him who has injured me!"

In spite of his apparent resignation, the Jesuit's voice was greatly agitated. He seemed to feel a hot iron upon his cheek, for never before in his life, whether as a soldier or a priest, had he suffered such an insult. He had thrown himself upon his knees, partly from religious mummery, and partly to avoid the gaze of the marshal, fearing that, were he to meet his eye, he should not be able to answer for himself, but give way to his impetuous feeling. On seeing the Jesuit kneel down, and on hearing his hypocritical invocation, the marshal, whose sword was in his hand, shook with indignation.

"Stand up, scoundrel!" he said, "stand

up, wretch!" And he spurned the Jesuit with his boot.

At this new insult, Father d'Aigrigny leaped up, as if he had been moved by steel springs. It was too much; he could bear no more. Blinded with rage, he rushed to the table, caught up the sword, and exclaimed, grinding his teeth together: "Ah! you will have blood. Well, then! it shall be yours—if possible!"

And the Jesuit, still in all the vigor of manhood, his face purple, his large gray eyes sparkling with hate, fell upon his guard with the ease and skill of a finished swordsman.

"At last!" cried the marshal, as their blades were about to cross.

But once more reflection came to damp the fire of the Jesuit. He remembered how this hazardous duel would gratify the wishes of Rodin, whose fate was in his hands, and whom he hated perhaps even more than the marshal. Therefore, in spite of the fury which possessed him, in spite of his secret hope to conquer in this combat, so strong and healthy did he feel himself, and so fatal had been the effects of grief on the constitution of Marshal Simon, he succeeded in mastering his rage, and, to the amazement of the marshal,

dropped the point of his sword, exclaiming: "I am a minister of the Lord, and must not shed blood. Forgive me, Heaven! and, oh! forgive my brother also."

Then, placing the blade beneath his heel, he drew the hilt suddenly toward him, and broke the weapon into two pieces. The duel was no longer possible. Father d'Aigrigny had put it out of his own power to yield to a new burst of violence, of which he saw the imminent danger. Marshal Simon remained for an instant mute and motionless with surprise and indignation, for he also saw that the duel was now impossible. But, suddenly, imitating the Jesuit, the marshal placed his blade also under his heel, broke it in half, and picking up the pointed end, about eighteen inches in length, tore off his black silk cravat, rolled it round the broken part so as to form a handle, and said to Father d'Aigrigny: "Then we will fight with daggers."

Struck with this mixture of coolness and ferocity, the Jesuit exclaimed: "Is this then a demon of hell?"

"No; it is a father, whose children have been murdered," said the marshal, in a hollow voice, while he fitted the blade to his hand, and a tear stood in the eye that instantly after became fierce and ardent.

The Jesuit saw that tear. There was in this mixture of vindictive rage and paternal grief something so awful, and yet so sacred, that for the first time in his life Father d'Aigrigny felt fear—cowardly, ignoble fear—fear for his own safety. While a combat with swords was in question, in which skill, agility, and experience are such powerful auxiliaries to courage, his only difficulty had been to repress the ardor of his hate—but when he thought of the combat proposed, body to body, face to face, heart to heart, he trembled, grew pale, and exclaimed: "A butchery with knives?—never!"

His countenance and the accent betrayed his alarm, so that the marshal himself was struck with it, and, fearing to lose his revenge, he cried: "After all, he is a coward! The wretch had only the courage or vanity of a fencer. This pitiful renegade—this traitor to his country—whom I have cuffed, kicked—yes, kicked, most noble marquis!—shame of your ancient house—disgrace to the rank of gentleman, old or new—ah! it is not hypocrisy, it is not calculation, as I at first thought—it is fear! You need the noise of war and the eyes of spectators to give you courage—"

"Sir—have a care!" said Father d'Ai-

grigny, stammering through his clinched teeth, for rage and hate now made him forget his fears.

"Must I then spit on you, to make the little blood you have left rise to your face?" cried the exasperated marshal.

"Oh! this is too much! too much!" said the Jesuit, seizing the pointed piece of the blade that lay at his feet.

"It is not enough," said the marshal, panting for breath. "There, Judas!" and he spat in his face.

"If you will not fight now," added the marshal, "I will beat you like a dog, base child-murderer!"

On receiving the uttermost insult which can be offered to an already insulted man, Father d'Aigrigny lost all his presence of mind, forgot his interests, his resolutions, his fears, forgot even Rodin—felt only the frenzied ardor of revenge—and, recovering his courage, rejoiced in the prospect of a close struggle, in which his superior strength promised success over the enfeebled frame of the marshal—for, in this kind of brutal and savage combat, physical strength offers an immense advantage. In an instant, Father d'Aigrigny had rolled his handkerchief round the broken blade, and rushed upon Marshal Simon, who re-

ceived the shock with intrepidity. For the short time that this unequal struggle lasted —unequal, for the marshal had since some days been a prey to a devouring fever, which had undermined his strength—the two combatants, mute in their fury, uttered not a word or a cry. Had any one been present at this horrible scene, it would have been impossible for him to tell how they dealt their blows. He would have seen two heads—frightful, livid, convulsed —rising, falling, now here, now there—arms, now stiff as bars of iron, and now twisting like serpents—and in the midst of the undulations of the blue coat of the marshal and the black cassock of the Jesuit from time to time the sudden gleam of the steel. He would have heard only a dull stamping, and now and then a deep breath. In about two minutes at most, the two adversaries fell, and rolled one over the other. One of them—it was Father d'Aigrigny—contrived to disengage himself with a violent effort, and to rise upon his knees. His arms fell powerless by his side, and then the dying voice of the marshal murmured: "My children! Dagobert!"

"I have killed him," said Father d'Aigrigny, in a weak voice; "but I feel—that I am wounded—to death."

Leaning with one hand on the ground, the Jesuit pressed the other to his bosom. His black cassock was pierced through and through, but the blades which had served for the combat being triangular and very sharp, the blood, instead of issuing from the wounds, was flowing inward.

"Oh! I die—I choke," said Father d'Aigrigny, whose features were already changing with the approach of death.

At this moment, the key turned twice in the door, Rodin appeared on the threshold, and, thrusting in his head, he said in a humble and discreet voice: "May I come in?"

At this dreadful irony, Father d'Aigrigny strove to rise and rush upon Rodin; but he fell back exhausted; the blood was choking him.

"Monster of hell!" he muttered, casting on Rodin a terrible glance of rage and agony. "Thou art the cause of my death."

"I always told you, my dear father, that your old military habits would be fatal to you," answered Rodin, with a frightful smile. "Only a few days ago I gave you warning, and advised you to take a blow patiently from this old swordsman—who seems to have done with that work for-

ever, which is well—for the Scripture says: 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' And then this Marshal Simon might have had some claim on his daughters' inheritance. And, between ourselves, my dear father, what was I to do? It was necessary to sacrifice you for the common interest; the rather that I well knew what you had in pickle for me to-morrow. But I am not so easily caught napping."

"Before I die," said Father d'Aigrigny, in a failing voice, "I will unmask you."

"Oh, no, you will not," said Rodin, shaking his head with a knowing air; "I alone, if you please, will receive your last confession."

"Oh! this is horrible," moaned Father d'Aigrigny, whose eyes were closing. "May God have mercy on me, if it is not too late!—Alas! at this awful moment, I feel that I have been a great sinner—"

"And, above all, a great fool," said Rodin, shrugging his shoulders, and watching with cold disdain the dying moments of his accomplice.

Father d'Aigrigny had now but a few minutes more to live. Rodin perceived it, and said: "It is time to call for help." And the Jesuit ran, with an air of alarm

and consternation, into the courtyard of the house.

Others came at his cries; but, as he had promised, Rodin had only quitted Father d'Aigrigny as the latter had breathed his last sigh.

. . . . . .

That evening, alone in his chamber, by the glimmer of a little lamp, Rodin sat plunged in a sort of ecstatic contemplation, before the print representing Sixtus V. The great house clock struck twelve. At the last stroke, Rodin drew himself up in all the savage majesty of his infernal triumph, and exclaimed: "This is the first of June. There are no more Renneponts! —Methinks I hear the hour from the clock of St. Peter's at Rome striking!"

CHAPTER LXVII.

A MESSAGE.

WHILE Rodin sat plunged in ambitious reverie, contemplating the portrait of Sixtus V., good little Father Caboccini, whose warm embraces had so much irritated the first-mentioned personage, went secretly to Faringhea, to deliver to him a fragment of an ivory crucifix, and said to him, with his usual air of jovial good-nature: "His Excellency Cardinal Malipieri, on my depart-

ure from Rome, charged me to give you this only on the 31st of May."

The half-caste, who was seldom affected by anything, started abruptly, almost with an expression of pain. His face darkened, and, bending upon the little father a piercing look, he said to him: "You were to add something."

"True," replied Father Caboccini; "the words I was to add are these: 'There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'"

"It is well," said the other. Heaving a deep sigh, he joined the fragment of the ivory crucifix to a piece already in his possession; it fitted exactly.

Father Caboccini looked at him with curiosity, for the cardinal had only told him to deliver the ivory fragment to Faringhea, and to repeat the above words. Being somewhat mystified with all this, the reverend father said to the half-caste: "What are you going to do with that crucifix?"

"Nothing," said Faringhea, still absorbed in painful thought.

"Nothing?" resumed the reverend father, in astonishment. "What, then, was the use of bringing it so far?"

Without satisfying his curiosity, Faringhea replied: "At what hour to-morrow

does Father Rodin go to the Rue Saint-François?"

"Very early."

"Before leaving home, he will go to say prayers in the chapel?"

"Yes, according to the habit of our reverend fathers."

"You sleep near him?"

"Being his *socius*, I occupy the room next to his."

"It is possible," said Faringhea, after a moment's silence, "that the reverend father, full of the great interests which occupy his mind, might forget to go to the chapel. In that case, pray remind him of that pious duty."

"I shall not fail."

"Pray do not fail," repeated Faringhea, anxiously.

"Be satisfied," said the good little father; "I see that you take great interest in his salvation."

"Great interest."

"It is very praiseworthy in you. Continue as you have begun, and you may one day belong completely to our Company," said Father Caboccini, affectionately.

"I am as yet but a poor auxiliary member," said Faringhea, humbly; "but no one is more devoted to the Society.

body and soul. Bowanee is nothing to it."

"Bowanee! who is that, my good friend?"

"Bowanee makes corpses which rot in the ground. The Society makes corpses which walk about."

"Ah, yes! Perindè ac cadaver—they were the last words of our great saint, Ignatius de Loyola. But who is this Bowanee?"

"Bowanee is to the Society what a child is to a man," replied the Asiatic, with growing excitement. "Glory to the Company—glory! Were my father its enemy, I would kill my father. The man whose genius inspires me most with admiration, respect, and terror—were he its enemy, I would kill, in spite of all," said the half-caste, with an effort. Then, after a moment's silence, he looked full in Caboccini's face, and added: "I say this that you may report my words to Cardinal Malipieri, and beg him to mention them to—"

Faringhea stopped short. "To whom should the cardinal mention your words?" asked Caboccini.

"He knows," replied the half-caste, abruptly. "Good-night!"

"Good-night, my friend! I can only

approve of your excellent sentiments with regard to our Company. Alas! it is in want of energetic defenders, for there are said to be traitors in its bosom."

"For those," said Faringhea, "we must have no pity."

"Certainly," said the good little father; "we understand one another."

"Perhaps," said the half-caste. "Do not, at all events, forget to remind Father Rodin to go to chapel to-morrow morning."

"I will take care of that," said Father Caboccini.

The two men parted. On his return to the house, Caboccini learned that a courier, only arrived that night from Rome, had brought dispatches to Rodin.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE FIRST OF JUNE.

THE chapel belonging to the house of the reverend fathers, in the Rue de Vaugirard, was gay and elegant. Large panes of stained glass admitted a mysterious light; the altar shone with gold and silver; and at the entrance of this little church, in an obscure corner beneath the organ loft, was a font for holy water in sculptured marble. It was close to this font, in a dark nook where he could hardly be seen,

that Faringhea knelt down, early on the first of June, as soon indeed as the chapel doors were opened. The half-caste was exceedingly sad. From time to time he started and sighed, as if agitated by a violent internal struggle. This wild, untamable being, possessed with the monomania of evil and destruction, felt, as may be imagined, a profound admiration for Rodin, who exercised over him a kind of magnetic fascination. The half-caste, almost a wild beast in human form, saw something supernatural in the infernal genius of Rodin. And the latter, too sagacious not to have discovered the savage devotion of this wretch, had made, as we have seen, good use of him, in bringing about the tragical termination of the loves of Adrienne and Djalma. But what excited to an incredible degree the admiration of Faringhea was what he knew of the Society of Jesus. This immense, occult power, which undermined the world by its subterraneous ramifications, and reached its ends by diabolical means, had inspired the half-caste with wild enthusiasm. And if anything in the world surpassed his fanatical admiration for Rodin, it was his blind devotion to the Company of Ignatius de Loyola, which, as he said,

could make corpses that walk about. Hid in the shadow of the organ-loft, Faringhea was reflecting deeply on these things, when footsteps were heard, and Rodin entered the chapel, accompanied by his *socius*, the little one-eyed father.

Whether from absence of mind, or that the shadow of the organ-loft completely concealed the half-caste, Rodin dipped his fingers into the font without perceiving Faringhea, who stood motionless as a statue, though a cold sweat streamed from his brow. The prayer of Rodin was, as may be supposed, short; he was in haste to get to the Rue Saint-François. After kneeling down with Father Caboccini for a few seconds, he rose, bowed respectfully to the altar, and returned toward the door, followed by his *socius*. At the moment Rodin approached the font he perceived the tall figure of the half-caste standing out from the midst of the dark shadow; advancing a little, Faringhea bowed respectfully to Rodin, who said to him, in a low voice: "Come to me at two o'clock."

So saying, Rodin stretched forth his hand to dip it into the holy water; but Faringhea spared him the trouble, by offering him the sprinkling-brush, which generally stood in the font.

Pressing between his dirty fingers the damp hairs of the brush, which the half-caste held by the handle, Rodin wetted his thumb and forefinger, and, according to custom, traced the sign of the cross upon his forehead. Then, opening the door of the chapel, he went out again, after again repeating to Faringhea: "Come to me at two o'clock."

Thinking he would also make use of the sprinkling-brush, which Faringhea, still motionless, held with a trembling hand, Father Caboccini stretched out his fingers to reach it, when the half-breed, as if determined to confine his favors to Rodin, hastily withdrew the instrument. Deceived in his expectation, Father Caboccini lost no time in following Rodin, whom he was not to leave that day for a single moment, and, getting into a hackney-coach with him, set out for the Rue Saint-François. It is impossible to describe the look which the half-breed fixed upon Rodin as the latter quitted the chapel. Left alone in the sacred edifice, Faringhea sunk upon the stones, half kneeling, half crouching, with his face buried in his hands. As the coach drew near the quarters of the Marais, in which was situated the house of Marius de Rennepont, a feverish agitation, and

the devouring impatience of triumph, were visible on the countenance of Rodin. Two or three times he opened his pocketbook, and read and arranged the different certificates of death of the various members of the Rennepont family; and from time to time he thrust his head anxiously from the coach window, as if he had wished to hasten the slow progress of the vehicle.

The good little father, his *socius*, did not take his eye off Rodin, and his look had a strange and crafty expression. At last the coach entered the Rue Saint-François, and stopped before the iron-studded door of the old house, which had been closed for a century and a half. Rodin sprung from the coach with the agility of a young man, and knocked violently at the door, while Father Caboccini, less light of foot, descended more prudently to the ground. No answer was returned to the loud knocking of Rodin. Trembling with anxiety, he knocked again. This time, as he listened attentively, he heard slow steps approaching. They stopped at some distance from the door, which was not yet opened.

"It is keeping one upon red-hot coals," said Rodin, for he felt as if there was a burning fire in his chest. He again shook

the door violently, and began to gnaw his nails according to his custom.

Suddenly the door opened, and Samuel, the Jew guardian, appeared beneath the porch. The countenance of the old man expressed bitter grief. Upon his venerable cheeks were the traces of recent tears, which he strove to dry with his trembling hands, as he opened the door to Rodin.

"Who are you, gentlemen?" said Samuel

"I am the bearer of a power of attorney from the Abbe Gabriel, the only living representative of the Rennepont family," answered Rodin, hastily. "This gentleman is my secretary," added he, pointing to Father Caboccini, who bowed.

After looking attentively at Rodin, Samuel resumed: "I recognize you, sir. Please to follow me." And the old guardian advanced toward the house in the garden, making a sign to the two reverend fathers to follow.

"That confounded old man kept me so long at the door," said Rodin to his *socius*, "that I think I have caught a cold in consequence. My lips and throat are dried up, like parchment baked at the fire."

"Will you not take something, my dear good father? Suppose you were to ask this man for a glass of water," cried the

little one-eyed priest, with tender solicitude.

"No, no," answered Rodin; "it is nothing. I am devoured by impatience. That is all."

Pale and desolate, Bathsheba, the wife of Samuel, was standing at the door of the apartment she occupied with her husband, in the building next the street. As the Jew passed before her, he said, in Hebrew: "The curtains of the Hall of Mourning?"

"Are closed."

"And the iron casket?"

"Is prepared," answered Bathsheba, also in Hebrew.

After pronouncing these words, completely unintelligible to Rodin and Caboccini, Samuel and Bathsheba exchanged a bitter smile, notwithstanding the despair impressed on their countenances.

Ascending the steps, followed by the two reverend fathers, Samuel entered the vestibule of the house, in which a lamp was burning. Endowed with an excellent local memory, Rodin was about to take the direction of the Red Saloon, in which had been held the first convocation of the heirs, when Samuel stopped him, and said: "It is not that way."

Then, taking the lamp, he advanced to-

ward a dark staircase, for the windows of the house had not been unbricked.

"But," said Rodin, "the last time, we met in a saloon on the ground floor."

"To-day we must go higher," answered Samuel, as he began slowly to ascend the stairs.

"Where to? higher!" said Rodin, following him.

"To the Hall of Mourning," replied the Jew, and he continued to ascend.

"What is the Hall of Mourning?" resumed Rodin in some surprise.

"A place of tears and death," answered the Israelite; and he kept on ascending through the darkness, for the little lamp threw but a faint light around.

"But," said Rodin, more and more astonished, and stopping short on the stairs, "why go to this place?"

"The money is there," answered Samuel, and he went on.

"Oh! if the money is there, that alters the case," replied Rodin; and he made haste to regain the few steps he had lost by stopping.

Samuel continued to ascend, and, at a turn of the staircase, the two Jesuits could see, by the pale light of the little lamp, the profile of the old Israelite, in the space left

between the iron balustrade and the wall, as he climbed on with difficulty above them. Rodin was struck with the expression of Samuel's countenance. His black eyes, generally so calm, sparkled with ardor. His features, usually impressed with a mixture of sorrow, intelligence, and goodness, seemed to grow harsh and stern, and his thin lips wore a strange smile.

"It is not so very high," whispered Rodin to Caboccini, "and yet my legs ache, and I am quite out of breath. There is a strange throbbing too in my temples."

In fact, Rodin breathed hard and with difficulty. To this confidential communication, good little Father Caboccini, in general so full of tender care for his colleague, made no answer. He seemed to be in deep thought.

"Will we soon be there?" said Rodin, impatiently, to Samuel.

"We are there," replied the Israelite.

"And a good thing too," said Rodin.

"Very good," said the Jew.

Stopping in the midst of a corridor, he pointed with the hand in which he held the lamp to a large door from which streamed a faint light. In spite of his growing surprise, Rodin entered resolutely, followed

by Father Caboccini and Samuel. The apartment in which these three personages now found themselves was very large. The daylight only entered from a belvedere in the roof, the four sides of which had been covered with leaden plates, each of which was pierced with seven holes, forming a cross, thus:

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Now, the light being only admitted through these holes, the obscurity would have been complete, had it not been for a lamp which burned on a large massive slab of black marble, fixed against one of the walls. One would have taken it for a funeral chamber, for it was all hung with black curtains, fringed with white. There was no furniture, save the slab of black marble we have already mentioned. On this slab was an iron casket, of the manufacture of the seventeenth century, admirably adorned with open work, like lace made of metal.

Addressing Rodin, who was wiping his forehead with his dirty handkerchief, and looking round him with surprise, but not

fear, Samuel said to him: "The will of the testator, however strange it may appear, is sacred with me, and must be accomplished in all things."

"Certainly," said Rodin; "but what are we to do here?"

"You will know presently, sir. You are the representative of the only remaining heir of the Rennepont family, the Abbe Gabriel de Rennepont?"

"Yes, sir, and here are my papers," replied Rodin.

"To save time," resumed Samuel, "I will, previous to the arrival of the magistrate, go through the inventory of the securities contained in this casket, which I withdrew yesterday from the custody of the Bank of France."

"The securities are there?" cried Rodin, advancing eagerly toward the casket.

"Yes, sir," replied Samuel, "as by list. Your secretary will call them over, and I will produce each in turn. They can then be replaced in the casket, which I will deliver up to you in presence of the magistrate."

"All this seems perfectly correct," said Rodin.

Samuel delivered the list to Father Caboccini, and, approaching the casket, touched

a spring, which was not seen by Rodin. The heavy lid flew open, and, while Father Caboccini read the names of the different securities, Samuel showed them to Rodin, who returned them to the old Jew, after a careful examination. This verification did not last long, for this immense fortune was all comprised, as we already know, in eight government securities, five hundred thousand francs in bank-notes, thirty-five thousand francs in gold, and two hundred and fifty francs in silver—making in all an amount of two hundred and twelve millions, one hundred and seventy-five thousand francs. When Rodin had counted the last of the five hundred bank-notes, of a thousand francs each, he said, as he returned them to Samuel: "It is quite right. Two hundred and twelve millions, one hundred and seventy-five thousand francs!"

He was no doubt almost choked with joy, for he breathed with difficulty, his eyes closed, and he was obliged to lean upon Father Caboccini's arm, as he said to him in an altered voice: "It is singular. I thought myself proof against all such emotions; but what I feel is extraordinary."

The natural paleness of the Jesuit increased so much, and he seemed so much

agitated with convulsive movement, that Father Caboccini exclaimed: "My dear father, collect yourself; do not let success overcome you thus."

While the little one-eyed man was attending to Rodin, Samuel carefully replaced the securities in the iron casket. Thanks to his unconquerable energy, and to the joy he felt at seeing himself so near the term of his labors, Rodin mastered this attack of weakness, and drawing himself up, calm and proud, he said to Caboccini:

"It is nothing. I did not survive the cholera to die of joy on the first of June."

And, though still frightfully pale, the countenance of the Jesuit shone with audacious confidence. But now, when Rodin appeared to be quite recovered, Father Caboccini seemed suddenly transformed. Though short, fat, and one-eyed, his features assumed on the instant so firm, harsh, and commanding an expression, that Rodin recoiled a step as he looked at him. Then Father Caboccini, drawing a paper from his pocket, kissed it respectfully, glanced sternly at Rodin, and read as follows, in a severe and menacing tone:

" 'On receipt of the present rescript, the Reverend Father Rodin will deliver up all his powers to the Reverend Father Caboc-

cini, who is alone commissioned, with the Reverend Father d'Aigrigny, to receive the inheritance of the Rennepont family, if, in His eternal justice, the Lord should restore this property, of which our Company has been wronged.

"'Moreover, on receipt of the present rescript, the Reverend Father Rodin, in charge of a person to be named by the Reverend Fathre Caboccini, shall be conveyed to our house in the town of Laval, to be kept in strict seclusion in his cell until further orders.'"

Then Father Caboccini handed the rescript to Rodin, that the latter might read the signature of the General of the Company. Samuel, greatly interested by this scene, drew a few steps nearer, leaving the casket half-open. Suddenly, Rodin burst into a loud laugh—a laugh of joy, contempt and triumph, impossible to describe. Father Caboccini looked at him with angry astonishment; when Rodin, growing still more imperious and haughty, and with an air of more sovereign disdain than ever, pushed aside the paper with the back of his dirty hand, and said: "What is the date of that scribble?"

"The eleventh of May," answered Father Caboccini in amazement.

"Here is a brief that I received last night from Rome, under date of the eighteenth. It informs me that I am appointed GENERAL OF THE ORDER. Read!"

Father Caboccini took the paper, read it, and remained thunderstruck. Then, returning it humbly to Rodin, he respectfully bent his knee before him. Thus seemed the ambitious views of Rodin accomplished. In spite of the hatred and suspicion of that party of which Cardinal Malipieri was the representative and the chief, Rodin, by address and craft, audacity and persuasion, and in consequence of the high esteem in which his partisans at Rome held his rare capacity, had succeeded in deposing his general, and in procuring his own elevation to that eminent post. Now, according to his calculation, aided by the millions he was about to possess, it would be but one step from that post to the pontifical throne. A mute witness of this scene, Samuel smiled also with an air of triumph, as he closed the casket by means of the spring known only to himself. That metallic sound recalled Rodin from the heights of his mad ambition to the realities of life, and he said to Samuel, in a sharp voice: "You have heard! These millions must be delivered to me alone."

He extended his hands eagerly and impatiently toward the casket, as if he would have taken possession of it, before the arrival of the magistrate. Then Samuel in his turn seemed transfigured, and, folding his arms upon his breast, and drawing up his aged form to its full height, he assumed a threatening and imposing air. His eyes flashed with indignation, and he said in a solemn tone: "This fortune—at first the humble remains of the inheritance of the most noble of men, whom the plots of the sons of Loyola drove to suicide—this fortune, which has since become royal in amount, thanks to the sacred probity of three generations of faithful servants—this fortune shall never be the reward of falsehood, hypocrisy and murder. No! the eternal justice of Heaven will not allow it."

"Of murder? what do you mean, sir?" asked Rodin, boldly.

Samuel made no answer. He stamped his foot and extended his arm slowly toward the extremity of the apartment. Then Rodin and Father Caboccini beheld an awful spectacle. The draperies on the wall were drawn aside, as if by an invisible hand. Round a funeral vault, faintly illumined by the bluish light of a silver lamp, six dead bodies were ranged upon

black biers, dressed in long black robes. They were: Jacques Rennepont—Francois Hardy—Rose and Blanche Simon—Adrienne and Djalma. They appeared to be asleep. Their eyelids were closed, their hands crossed over their breasts. Father Caboccini, trembling in every limb, made the sign of the cross, and retreating to the opposite wall, buried his face in his hands. Rodin, on the contrary, with agitated countenance, staring eyes, and hair standing on end, yielding to an invincible attraction, advanced toward those inanimate forms. One would have said that these last of the Renneponts had only just expired. They seemed to be in the first hour of the eternal sleep.*

"Behold those whom thou hast slain!" cried Samuel, in a voice broken with sobs. "Yea! your destestable plots caused their death—and, as they fell one by one, it was my pious care to obtain possession of their poor remains, that they may all repose in the same sepulcher. Oh! cursed—cursed—cursed—be thou who hast killed them! But their spoils shall escape thy murderous hands."

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*Should this appear incredible, we would remind the reader of the marvelous discoveries in the art of embalming—particularly Dr. Gannal's.

Rodin, still drawn forward in spite of himself, had approached the funeral couch of Djalma. Surmounting his first alarm, the Jesuit, to assure himself that he was not the sport of a frightful dream, ventured to touch the hands of the Asiatic—and found that they were damp and pliant, though cold as ice.

The Jesuit drew back in horror. For some seconds he trembled convulsively. But, his first amazement over, reflection returned, and, with reflection, came that invincible energy, that infernal obstinacy of character that gave him so much power. Steadying himself on his legs, drawing his hand across his brow, raising his head, moistening his lips two or three times before he spoke—for his throat and mouth grew drier and hotter, without his being able to explain the cause—he succeeded in giving to his features an imperious and ironical expression, and, turning toward Samuel, who wept in silence, he said to him, in a hoarse, guttural voice: "I need not show you certificates of their death. There they are in person." And he pointed with his bony hand to the six dead bodies.

At these words of his general, Father Caboccini again made the sign of the cross, as if he had seen a fiend.

"Oh, my God!" cried Samuel; "thou hast quite abandoned this man. With what a calm look he contemplates his victims!"

"Come, sir!" said Rodin, with a horrid smile; "this is a natural wax-work exhibition, that is all. My calmness proves my innocence—and we had best come at once to business. I have an appointment at two o'clock. So let us carry down this casket."

He advanced toward the marble slab. Seized with indignation and horror, Samuel threw himself before him, and, pressing with all his might on a knob in the lid of the casket—a knob which yielded to the pressure—he exclaimed: "Since your infernal soul is incapable of remorse, it may perhaps be shaken by disappointed avarice."

"What does he say?" cried Rodin. "What is he doing?"

"Look!" said Samuel, in his turn assuming an air of savage triumph. "I told you that the spoils of your victims should escape your murderous hands."

Hardly had he uttered these words, before through the open-work of the iron casket rose a light cloud of smoke, and an odor of burned paper spread itself through

the room. Rodin understood it instantly. "Fire!" he exclaimed, as he rushed forward to seize the casket. It had been made fast to the heavy marble slab.

"Yes, fire," said Samuel. "In a few minutes, of that immense treasure there will remain nothing but ashes. And better so than that it should belong to you or yours. This treasure is not mine, and it only remains for me to destroy it—since Gabriel de Rennepont will be faithful to the oath he has taken."

"Help! water! water!" cried Rodin, as he covered the casket with his body, trying in vain to extinguish the flames, which, fanned by the current of air, now issued from the thousand apertures of the lid; but soon the intensity of the fire diminished, a few threads of bluish smoke alone mounted upward—and then all was extinct.

The work was done! Breathless and faint, Rodin leaned against the marble slab. For the first time in his life he wept, large tears of rage rolled down his cadaverous cheeks. But suddenly, dreadful pains, at first dull, but gradually augmenting in intensity, seized on him with so much fury, though he employed all his energy to struggle against them, that he fell on his knees, and, pressing his two hands to his

chest, murmured with an attempt to smile: "It is nothing. Do not be alarmed. A few spasms—that is all. The treasure is destroyed—but I remain General of the Order. Oh! I suffer. What a furnace!" he added, writhing in agony. "Since I entered this cursed house I know not what ails me. If—I had not lived on roots—water—bread—which I go myself to buy—I should think—I was poisoned—for I triumph—and Cardinal Malipieri has long arms. Yes—I still triumph—for I will not die—this time no more than the other—I will not die!"

Then, as he stretched out his arms convulsively, he continued: "It is fire that devours my entrails. No doubt, they have tried to poison me. But when? but how?"

After another pause, Rodin again cried out, in a stifled voice: "Help! help me, you that stand looking on—like specters! Help me, I say!"

Horrorstruck at this dreadful agony, Samuel and Father Caboccini were unable to stir.

"Help!" repeated Rodin, in a tone of strangulation. "This poison is horrible. But how—" Then, with a terrific cry of rage, as if a sudden idea had struck him, he exclaimed: "Ha! Faringhea—this morn-

ing—the holy water—he knows such subtle poisons. Yes—it is he—he had an interview with Malipieri. The demon! Oh! it was well played. The Borgias are still the same. Oh! it is all over. I die. They will regret me, the fools! Oh! hell! hell! The Church knows not its loss—but I burn—help!"

They came to his assistance. Quick steps were heard upon the stairs, and Dr. Baleinier, followed by the Princess de Saint-Dizier, appeared at the entrance of the Hall of Mourning. The princess had learned vaguely that morning the death of Father d'Aigrigny, and had come to question Rodin upon the subject. When this woman, entering the room, suddenly saw the frightful spectacle that offered itself to her view—when she saw Rodin writhing in horrible agony, and, further on, by the light of the sepulchral lamp, those six corpses—and, among them, her own niece, and the two orphans whom she had sent to meet their death—she stood petrified with horror, and her reason was unable to withstand the shock. She looked slowly round her, and then raised her arms on high and burst into a wild fit of laughter. She had gone mad! While Dr. Baleinier supported the head of Rodin, who ex-

pired in his arms, Faringhea appeared at the door; remaining in the shade, he cast a ferocious glance at the corpse of the Jesuit. "He would have made himself the chief of the Company of Jesus, to destroy it," said he; "with me, the Company of Jesus stands in the place of Bowanee. I have obeyed the cardinal!"

EPILOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

FOUR YEARS AFTER.

FOUR years had elapsed, since the events we have just related, when Gabriel de Rennepont wrote the following letter to the Abbe Joseph Charpentier, curate of the Parish of Saint-Aubin, a hamlet of Sologne:

"SPRINGWATER FARM, *June* 2d, 1836.

"Intending to write to you yesterday, my dear Joseph, I seated myself at the little old black table that you will remember well. My window looks, you know, upon the farmyard, and I can see all that takes place there. These are grave preliminaries, my friend, but I am coming to the point. I had just taken my seat at the table, when, looking from the window, this is what I saw. You, my dear Joseph, who can draw so well, should have been

there to have sketched the charming scene. The sun was sinking, the sky serene, the air warm and balmy with the breath of the hawthorn, which, flowering by the side of a little rivulet, forms the edge which borders the yard. Under the large pear-tree, close to the wall of the barn, sat upon the stone bench my adopted father, Dagobert, that brave and honest soldier whom you love so much. He appeared thoughtful, his white head was bowed on his bosom; with absent mind, he patted old Spoilsport, whose intelligent face was resting on his master's knees. By his side was his wife, my dear adopted mother, occupied with her sewing; and near them, on a stool, sat Angela, the wife of Agricola, nursing her last born child, while the gentle Magdalen, with the eldest boy in her lap, was occupied in teaching him the letters of the alphabet. Agricola had just returned from the fields, and was beginning to unyoke his cattle, when, struck like me, no doubt, with this picture, he stood gazing on it for a moment, with his hand still leaning on the yoke, beneath which bent submissive the broad foreheads of his two large black oxen.

"I cannot express to you, my friend, the enchanting repose of this picture, lighted

by the last rays of the sun, here and thero broken by the thick foliage. What various and touching types! The venerable face of the soldier—the good, loving countenance of my adopted mother—the fresh beauty of Angela, smiling on her little child—the soft melancholy of the hunchback, now and then pressing her lips to the fair, laughing cheek of Agricola's eldest son—and then Agricola himself, in his manly beauty, which seems to reflect so well the valor and honesty of his heart! Oh, my friend! in contemplating this assemblage of good, devoted, noble, and loving beings, so dear to each other, living retired in a little farm of our poor Sologne, my heart rose toward Heaven with a feeling of ineffable gratitude. This peace of the family circle—this clear evening, with the perfume of the woods and wild flowers wafted on the breeze—this deep silence, only broken by the murmur of the neighboring rill—all affected me with one of these passing fits of vague and sweet emotion, which one feels but cannot express. You well know it, my friend, who, in your solitary walks, in the midst of your immense plains of flowering heath, surrounded by forests of fir trees, often feel your eyes grow moist, without being able

to explain the cause of that sweet melancholy, which I, too, have often felt, during those glorious nights passed in the profound solitudes of America.

"But, alas! a painful incident disturbed the serenity of the picture. Suddenly I heard Dagobert's wife say to him: 'My dear—you are weeping!'

"At these words, Agricola, Angela, and Magdalen gathered round the soldier. Anxiety was visible upon every face. Then, as he raised his head abruptly, one could see two large tears trickle down his cheek to his white mustache. 'It is nothing, my children,' said he, in a voice of emotion; 'it is nothing. Only to-day is the first of June—and this day four years—' He could not complete the sentence; and, as he raised his hands to his eyes, to brush away the tears, we saw that he held between his fingers a little bronze chain, with a medal suspended to it. That is his dearest relic. Four years ago, almost dying with despair at the loss of the two angels, of whom I have so often spoken to you, my friend, he took from the neck of Marshal Simon, brought home dead from a fatal duel, this chain and medal which his children had so long worn. I went down instantly, as you may suppose,

to endeavor to soothe the painful remembrances of this excellent man; gradually, he grew calmer, and the evening was passed in a pious and quiet sadness.

"You cannot imagine, my friend, when I returned to my chamber, what cruel thoughts came to my mind, as I recalled those past events, from which I generally turn away with fear and horror. Then I saw once more the victims of those terrible and mysterious plots, the awful depths of which have never been penetrated, thanks to the deaths of Father d'A. and Father R., and the incurable madness of Madame de St. D., the three authors or accomplices of the dreadful deeds. The calamities occasioned by them are irreparable; for those who were thus sacrificed to a criminal ambition would have been the pride of humanity by the good they would have done. Ah, my friend! if you had known those noble hearts; if you had known the projects of splendid charity, formed by that young lady, whose heart was so generous, whose mind so elevated, whose soul so great! On the eve of her death, as a kind of prelude to her magnificent designs, after a conversation, the subject of which I must keep secret, even from you, she put into my hands a considerable

sum, saying, with her usual grace and goodness: 'I have been threatened with ruin, and it might perhaps come. What I now confide to you will at least be safe—safe for those who suffer. Give much—give freely—make as many happy hearts as you can. My happiness shall have a royal inauguration!' I do not know whether I ever told you, my friend, that, after those fatal events, seeing Dagobert and his wife reduced to misery, poor 'Mother Bunch' hardly able to earn a wretched subsistence, Agricola soon to become a father, and myself deprived of my curacy, and suspended by my bishop, for having given religious consolations to a Protestant, and offered up prayers at the tomb of an unfortunate suicide—I considered myself justified in employing a small portion of the sum intrusted to me by Mdlle. de Cardoville in the purchase of this farm in Dagobert's name.

"Yes, my friend, such is the origin of my fortune. The farmer to whom these few acres formerly belonged gave us the rudiments of our agricultural education, and common sense, and the study of a few good practical books, completed it. From an excellent workman, Agricola has become an equally excellent husbandman. I

have tried to imitate him, and have put my hand also to the plow; there is no derogation in it, for the labor which provides food for man is thrice hallowed, and it is truly to serve and glorify God to cultivate and enrich the earth He has created. Dagobert, when his first grief was a little appeased, seemed to gather new vigor from this healthy life of the fields; and, during his exile in Siberia, he had already learned to till the ground. Finally, my dear adopted mother and sister, and Agricola's good wife, have divided between them the household cares; and God has blessed this little colony of people, who, alas! have been sorely tried by misfortune, and who now only ask of toil and solitude a quiet, laborious, innocent life, and oblivion of great sorrows. Sometimes, in our winter evenings, you have been able to appreciate the delicate and charming mind of the gentle 'Mother Bunch,' the rare poetical imagination of Agricola, the tenderness of his mother, the good sense of his father, the exquisite natural grace of Angela. Tell me, my friend, was it possible to unite more elements of domestic happiness? What long evenings have we passed round the fire of crackling wood, reading, or commenting on a few immortal works,

which always warm the heart and enlarge the soul! What sweet talk have we had, and prolonged far into the night! And then Agricola's pastorals, and the timid literary confidences of Magdalen! And the fresh, clear voice of Angela, joined to the deep, manly tones of Agricola, in songs of simple melody! And the old stories of Dagobert, so energetic and picturesque in their warlike spirit! And the adorable gayety of the children, in their sports with good old Spoilsport, who rather lends himself to their play than takes part in it—for the faithful, intelligent creature seems always to be looking for somebody, as Dagobert says—and he is right. Yes, the dog also regrets those two angels, of whom he was the devoted guardian.

"Do not think, my friend, that our happiness makes us forgetful. No, no; not a day passes without our repeating, with pious and tender respect, those names so dear to our heart. And these painful memories, hovering forever about us, give to our calm and happy existence that shade of mild seriousness which struck you so much. No doubt, my friend, this kind of life, bounded by the family circle, and not extending beyond for the happiness or improvement of our brethren, may be set

down as selfish; but, alas! we have not the means—and though the poor man always finds a place at our frugal table, and shelter beneath our roof, we must renounce all great projects of fraternal action. The little revenue of our farm just suffices to supply our wants. Alas! when I think over it, notwithstanding a momentary regret, I cannot blame my resolution to keep faithfully my sacred oath, and to renounce that great inheritance, which, alas! had become immense by the death of my kindred. Yes, I believe I performed a duty when I begged the guardian of that treasure to reduce it to ashes, rather than let it fall into the hands of people who would have made an execrable use of it, or to perjure myself by disputing a donation which I had granted freely, voluntarily, sincerely. And yet, when I picture to myself the realization of the magnificent views of my ancestor—an admirable Utopia, only possible with immense resources—and which Mdlle. de Cardoville hoped to carry into execution with the aid of M. François Hardy, of Prince Djalma, of Marshal Simon and his daughters, and of myself—when I think of the dazzling focus of living forces which such an association would have been, and of the immense influence it

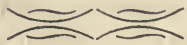
might have had on the happiness of the whole human race—my indignation and horror, as an honest man and a Christian, are excited against that abominable Company, whose black plots nipped in their bud all those great hopes which promised so much for futurity. What remains now of all these splendid projects? Several tombs. For my grave also is dug in that mausoleum, which Samuel has erected on the site of the house in the Rue Neuve-Saint-François, and of which he remains the keeper—faithful to the end!

. . . . . .

"I had written thus far, my friend, when I received your letter. So, after having forbidden you to see me, your bishop now orders that you shall cease to correspond with me. Your touching, painful regrets have deeply moved me, my friend. Often have we talked together of ecclesiastical discipline, and of the absolute power of the bishops over us, the poor working clergy, left to their mercy without aid or remedy. It is painful, but it is the law of the Church, my friend, and you have sworn to observe it. Submit as I have submitted. Every engagement is binding upon the man of honor! My poor, dear Joseph! would that you had the com-

pensations which remained to me after the rupture of ties that I so much value. But I know too well what you must feel—I cannot go on—I find it impossible to continue this letter; I might be bitter against those whose orders we are bound to respect. Since it must be so, this letter shall be my last. Farewell, my friend! farewell forever. My heart is almost broken.

"GABRIEL DE RENNEPONT."



CHAPTER II.

THE REDEMPTION.

DAY was about to dawn. A rosy light, almost imperceptible, began to glimmer in the east; but the stars still shone, sparkling with radiance, upon the azure of the zenith. The birds awoke beneath the fresh foliage of the great woods; and, with isolated warblings, sung the prelude of their morning concert. A light mist rose from the high grass, bathed in nocturnal dew, while the calm and limpid waters of a vast lake reflected the whitening dawn in their deep blue mirror. Everything promised one of those warm and joyous days that belong to the opening of summer.

Half-way up the slope of a hill, facing the east, a tuft of old, moss-grown willows, whose rugged bark disappeared beneath the climbing branches of wild honey-

suckle and harebells, formed a natural harbor; and on their gnarled and enormous roots, covered with thick moss, were seated a man and a woman, whose white hair, deep wrinkles, and bending figures announced extreme old age. And yet this woman had only lately been young and beautiful, with long black hair overshadowing her pale forehead. And yet this man had, a short time ago, been still in the vigor of his age. From the spot where this man and woman were reposing, could be seen the valley, the lake, the woods, and, soaring above the woods, the blue summit of a high mountain, from behind which the sun was about to rise. This picture, half veiled by the pale transparency of the morning twilight, was pleasing, melancholy, and solemn.

"Oh, my sister!" said the old man to the woman, who was reposing with him beneath the rustic arbor formed by the tuft of willow-trees; "oh, my sister! how many times during the centuries in which the hand of the Lord carried us onward, and, separated from each other, we traversed the world from pole to pole—how many times we have witnessed this awaking of Nature with a sentiment of incurable grief! Alas! it was but another day of

wandering — another useless day added to our life, since it brought death no nearer!"

"But now what happiness, oh, my brother! since the Lord has had mercy on us, and, with us, as with all other creatures, every returning day is a step nearer to the grave. Glory to Him! yes, glory!"

"Glory to Him, my sister! for since yesterday, when we again met, I feel that indescribable languor which announces the approach of death."

"Like you, my brother, I feel my strength, already shaken, passing away in a sweet exhaustion. Doubtless, the term of our life approaches. The wrath of the Lord is satisfied."

"Vlas, my sister! doubtless, also, the last of my doomed race will, at the same time, complete our redemption by his death; for the will of Heaven is manifest, that I can only be pardoned when the last of my family shall have disappeared from the face of the earth. To him, holiest among the holiest—was reserved the favor of accomplishing this end — he who has done so much for the salvation of his brethren!"

"Oh, yes, my brother! he who has suf-

fered so much, and without complaining, drunk to the dregs the bitter cup of woe—the minister of the Lord, who has been his Master's image upon earth—he was fitted for the last instrument of this redemption!"

"Yes, for I feel, my sister, that, at this hour, the last of my race, touching victim of slow persecution, is on the point of resigning his angelic soul to God. Thus, even to the end, have I been fatal to my doomed family. Lord, if Thy mercy is great, Thy anger is great likewise."

"Courage and hope, my brother! Think how after the expiation cometh pardon, and pardon is followed by a blessing. The Lord punished in you and your posterity the artisan rendered wicked by misfortune and injustice. He said to you: "Go on! without truce or rest—and your labor shall be vain—and every evening, throwing yourself on the hard ground, you shall be no nearer to the end of your eternal course!' And so, for centuries, men without pity have said to the artisan: 'Work! work! work! without truce or rest—and your honor shall be fruitful for all others, but fruitless for yourself—and every evening, throwing yourself on the hard ground, you

shall be no nearer to happiness and repose; and your wages shall only suffice to keep you alive in pain, privation, and poverty?' "

"Alas! alas! will it be always thus?"

"No, no, my brother! and instead of weeping over your lost race, rejoice for them—since their death was needed for your redemption, and in redeeming you, Heaven will redeem the artisan, cursed and feared by those who have laid on him the iron yoke. Yes, my brother! the time draweth nigh—Heaven's mercy will not stop with us alone. Yes, I tell you; in us will be rescued both the WOMAN and the SLAVE of these modern ages. The trial has been hard, brother; it has lasted throughout eighteen centuries; but it will last no longer. Look, my brother! see that rosy light, there in the east, gradually spreading over the firmament! Thus will rise the sun of the new emancipation —peaceful, holy, great, salutary, fruitful, filling the world with light and vivifying heat, like the day-star that will soon appear in heaven!"

"Yes, yes, my sister! I feel it. Your words are prophetic. We shall close our heavy eyes just as we see the aurora of the day of deliverance—a fair, a splendid

day, like that which is about to dawn. Henceforth I will only shed tears of pride and glory for those of my race who have died the martyrs of humanity, sacrificed by humanity's eternal enemies—for the true ancestors of the sacrilegious wretches, who blaspheme the name of Jesus by giving it to their Company, were the false Scribes and Pharisees whom the Saviour cursed! Yes! glory to the descendants of my family, who have been the last martyrs offered up by the accomplices of all slavery and all despotism, the pitiless enemies of those who wish to think, and not to suffer in silence—of those that would fain enjoy, as children of Heaven, the gifts which the Creator has bestowed upon all the human family. Yes, the day approaches — the end of the reign of our modern Pharisees—the false priests, who lend their sacrilegious aid to the merciless selfishness of the strong against the weak. by daring to maintain in the face of the exhaustless treasures of the creation, that God has made man for tears, and sorrow, and suffering—the false priests, who are the agents of all oppression, and would bow to the earth, in brutish and hopeless humiliation, the brow of every creature! No, no! let man lift his head proudly,

God made him to be noble and intelligent, free and happy."

"Oh, my brother! your words also are prophetic. Yes, yes! the dawn of that bright day approaches, even as the dawn of the natural day which, by the mercy of God, will be our last on earth."

"The last, my sister; for a strange weakness creeps over me, all matter seems dissolving in me, and my soul aspires to mount to heaven."

"Mine eyes are growing dim, brother; I can scarcely see that light in the east, which lately appeared so red."

"Sister! it is through a confused vapor that I now see the valley—the lake—the woods. My strength fails me."

"Blessed be God, brother! the moment of eternal rest is at hand."

"Yes, it comes, my sister! the sweetness of the everlasting sleep takes possession of my senses."

"Oh, happiness! I am dying."

"These eyes are closing, sister!"

"We are then forgiven!"

"Forgiven!"

"Oh, my brother! may this Divine redemption extend to all those who suffer upon the earth!"

"Die in peace, my sister! The great

day has dawned—the sun is rising—behold!"

"Blessed be God!"

"Blessed be God!"

. . . . . .

And at the moment when those two voices ceased forever, the sun rose, radiant and dazzling, and deluged the valley with its beams.

TO M. C—— P——.

To you, my friend, I dedicated this book. To inscribe it with your name was to assume an engagement that, in the absence of talent, it should be at least conscientious, sincere, and of a salutary influence, however limited. My object is attained. Some select hearts, like yours, my friend, have put into practice the legitimate association of labor, capital, and intelligence, and have already granted to their workmen a proportionate share in the profits of their industry. Others have laid the foundations of Common Dwelling-houses, and one of the chief capitalists of Hamburg has favored me with his views respecting an establishment of this kind, on the most gigantic scale.

As for the dispersion of the members of the Company of Jesus, I have taken less part in it than other enemies of the detest-

able doctrines of Loyola, whose influence and authority were far greater than mine.

Adieu, my friend. I could have wished this work more worthy of you; but you are indulgent, and will at least give me credit for the intentions which dictated it.

Believe me,

Yours, truly,

EUGENE SUE.

PARIS, 25*th August*, 1845.

THE END.

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